

THE FOREIGN OFFICE

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# THE FOREIGN OFFICE

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## INTRODUCTION

I RECALL a conversation with the late Lord Balfour, in which, speculating on the future development of large-scale organisations, he advanced the suggestion that the ever-increasing complication in their working, due to new methods of communication and other modern inventions, would in the end put them beyond the range of effective human control. Frankenstein would, in very truth, be crushed by the monster of his own creation. Lord Balfour, with his captivating air of whimsical detachment, gave two illustrations of his thought. One was the future development of great business "combines," when undertaking is added to undertaking, till the network of responsibility and calculation becomes too vast and varied for any directing mind to master it. There is, perhaps, a good deal in recent commercial and financial experience on both sides of the Atlantic to give substance to Lord Balfour's vision in this respect. The other illustration which he tentatively put forward was the future of the Foreign Office.

Certainly those who study the following pages, written by two erudite and accomplished officials in the service of that Department, will realise how

complex and world-wide is the network which centres in the stately building which was itself erected in Palmerstonian times,\* and which preserves the archives and traditions of so many of his predecessors. But it is a far cry from the days when Lord Palmerston was able to discharge his duty there by driving up from Broadlands two or three days a week, or even from the years when Lord Salisbury did most of his Foreign Office work at home and found little occasion for consultation with his secretaries. The charge of an Ambassador representing the policy of Britain in a foreign capital is in many respects as difficult and as delicate to-day as it ever was in the past. But there is a world of difference between old methods, represented by instructions written with a quill pen by the Minister's own fingers, copied in long-hand by a sedate secretary, and despatched to the Sovereign's representative in the pouch of a King's Messenger making his leisurely way by sailing-ship and post-chaise across Europe, and to-day's exchange between night and morning of a score of telegrams in cipher, each presenting some new facet in a many-

\* Foreign Office clerks have reason to be grateful to "Pam," who rejected the Gothic design first proposed by Sir Gilbert Scott, on the grounds that it would be "admirable for a monastery," in favour of the lines of a Venetian palace, "more light and more cheerful," thus substituting square-headed windows for the religious gloom which would have been unsuited to late hours of work.

sided situation, and each recording a stage in the reaction between the advice of the man on the spot and the conclusions of Ministers at home.

And while the public concentrates its attention on the leading problem, or the prominent excitement of the moment, and the skilled commentators of the Press direct their searchlight on the centre of the stage, there are almost continuous communications proceeding with many other corners of the world, unheeded by the rest of us, but each presenting its own urgent difficulty and calling for prompt treatment if a dangerous or uncomfortable situation is to be avoided. So vast and varied a range of duties can only be discharged through the collaboration of a staff endowed with the highest qualities of expert knowledge, of discretion, and of loyalty to the country they serve. Gone are the days when the gibe of the Fabian Essays may have had point that Civil Servants were "like the fountains in Trafalgar Square—they played from 10 to 4, with an interval for lunch." No one knows so well as the politician whose privilege it is for the time being to represent the Foreign Office in Cabinet and in Parliament, how impossible his task would be if it were not for the devoted and disinterested labour of the men whose life-work lies within the walls of the Department or in our Embassies abroad.

And if in these censorious days a Foreign Secretary

ever has the good fortune to receive public or Parliamentary approval for some piece of work in which he has been concerned, he usually has the uncomfortable feeling that the bouquet should not be offered to him, as he stands before the footlights, but is rightly due to unnamed collaborators behind the scenes. He may console himself with the reflection that, on the other hand, if by any chance anything goes wrong and criticism descends on some word or action not due to his own initiative, he will have the honour or the duty of standing the racket and taking the burden on himself. Such is the partnership upon which our public service is based, and nowhere is there a happier tradition of the co-operation which must exist between the politician and the permanent official than in the Department, the working of which it is the business of this book to describe.

JOHN SIMON.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
*July 1933.*

## AUTHORS' NOTE

*CHAPTERS I-XI of this book are by Sir John Tilley, Chapters XII-XVI by Mr. Gaselee, who is also responsible for the Bibliography and the Index.*

We desire to express our thanks to Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and to Sir Hubert Montgomery, late Chief Clerk and Deputy Under-Secretary of State, who read through our MS., and made many valuable suggestions; but the responsibility for all errors, and for all expressions of opinion, is ours alone.

J. T.

S. G.

## NOTE TO SECOND EDITION

WE have to thank many friends for pointing out misprints and inaccuracies which we have been able now to correct, and especially Sir Algernon Law, K.C.M.G., who put at our disposal his great knowledge of Foreign Office affairs derived from his long career in it, 1880-1916.

## ADDENDUM

SINCE the text of this book was printed off, certain administrative changes within the Office have made the diagram on p. 262 and the text on p. 263 incorrect in some small particulars. A new SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT has been formed to deal with the affairs of Italy, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Balkan States: the CENTRAL DEPARTMENT takes France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Danzig and War Debts: and the DOMINIONS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT (p. 264-5) reverts to its original status as a section of the TREATY DEPARTMENT.

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## THE FOREIGN OFFICE



## Chapter I

### EARLY HISTORY

WHEN undertaking to write a history of the Foreign Office, or indeed any history, the first question for consideration must be the starting-point.

The Foreign Office as a separate department of State, and under that name, dates from 1782, but an office, 'or offices, in which the business of "foreign affairs" was carried on had existed long before that.

The Foreign Office List, in its earlier editions, tells us that the first mention of a Secretary to the Sovereign occurs in the thirty-seventh year of the reign of Henry III, 1253. Sir Edward Troup, in his book, *The Home Office*, in this series, gives the reign of Richard II as the time when the title of Secretary to the Sovereign was first officially used.

According to the same authority, two Secretaries of equal standing were first appointed in 1540 (the Foreign Office List gives 1539). They dealt with the Sovereign's business generally under his directions, but in 1640 a formal division of foreign business between the two Secretaries was arranged, under which one took France, Holland, Germany, and the Baltic States, and the other Spain, Flanders, and Italy. This was the beginning of the division

into Northern and Southern Departments, which lasted till 1782.

From this it would seem to follow that 1640 and 1782 are alternative dates for the opening of a history of the Foreign Office. There is in my mind a third possibility.

Remembering that this is to be a history of the Foreign Office, not of foreign policy, or of Foreign Secretaries, it might be urged that the proper starting-point was 1906, when the reforms carried through gave the staff of the Foreign Office an entirely different position, with a life, or organisation, separate from that of the Secretary of State. Before 1906 the Foreign Office had had for some little time a partial identity, socially if not politically; since 1906 people have spoken of the Foreign Office when they meant not the Minister for the time being but the permanent staff. I propose to deal with the reforms of 1906 in a later chapter; meanwhile I emphasise the point as one of some historical importance.

Up to the time of Queen Anne foreign affairs were managed according to the fancy of the sovereign, even though a powerful Minister might sometimes inspire that fancy. Secretaries, even Secretaries of State, and clerks, merely carried out the sovereign's orders in a room or so within the precincts of the Palace.

In the eighteenth century the most powerful Minister of the day was apt to deal with foreign affairs as the monarch had dealt in earlier centuries, although the favour of George I and George II still counted for very much. During the latter part

of Walpole's administration, Secretaries of State were as a rule not much more than clerks to the Premier. Chatham in his time was equally supreme over his colleagues. Under Secretaries were of very little importance until the nineteenth century; and even in that century not of very great importance. Sir George Shee, the Political Under Secretary, writing\* to Mr. Backhouse, the Permanent Under Secretary, in 1832, about the arrangements for their attendance at the office in the evening, says: "Lord Palmerston, you know, never consults an Under Secretary. He merely sends out questions to be answered or papers to be copied when he is here in the evenings, and our only business is to obtain from the clerks the information that is wanted." Lord Salisbury, according to Lady Gwendolen Cecil,† greatly disliked consultations and discussions, and therefore did much of his work at home late at night. To come to the very last years before 1906, I have heard that very able man, Sir Thomas Sanderson, as he then was, criticised because he never offered opinions on policy to the Secretary of State; my belief is that he would not have regarded it as his duty to do so.

Up to 1906, therefore, the "Office," meaning the permanent staff, had not the significance which it then began to attain.

Nevertheless, I feel that the proper starting-point is 1640, although no detailed account of the earlier years is necessary.

Sir Edward Troup, quoting *The Principal Secre-*

\* F.O. Conf. Gen. No. 4.

† *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, ii. 224 and iii. 205.

*tary of State*, by Mrs. Higham, says that the division of foreign affairs between two secretaries was adopted in practice in the reign of James I, "one Secretary being chosen as *persona grata* to the Protestant Powers, and the other to the Catholic Governments." That may have been the original reason, but the arrangement was not strictly maintained, and later the affairs of France and Austria were dealt with by different secretaries. Finally, the Southern Department covered home affairs, Ireland, America, France, Spain, Portugal, the Barbary States, Italy, Switzerland, Turkey, while the Northern Department covered the rest of Europe.

I am disposed to believe that in the seventeenth century one secretary was apt to be the man of business while the other was the great man before the world. Mr. Secretary Nicholas, who is so often mentioned by Lord Clarendon, would, on that assumption, have been the man of business in the later years of Charles I and the first years of Charles II, as doubtless were Morris and Williamson, who was first Under Secretary of State, and later Secretary of State, in the reign of Charles II; their more showy colleagues were such men as Falkland, Digby, or Arlington. All writers agree that the division was a most inconvenient one, particularly when the offices were at some distance apart, one at Whitehall and the other at St. James's, with archives kept in yet another office, but originally the arrangement probably did not seem much more inconvenient to the sovereign who made it than the division of work between two or three Assistant Under Secretaries now appears to the Secretary of

State. Speed was not what it is now ; precedents were not voluminous ; most of the necessary facts were easily carried in the sovereign's head, and his secretaries, though not under the same roof, were sure to be near at hand. The inconvenience of the arrangement grew as business increased.

Taking 1640 as our starting-point, one early incident, which is mentioned in Clarendon's life, is of some interest as foreshadowing the importance attributed to examinations two hundred years later. In the reign of Charles I the Secretary's staff being of small account, precisians like Hyde himself thought a good knowledge of foreign languages requisite for the Secretary of State. The post was offered to Hyde in 1643 ; "and then," said Charles,\* "I must make Ned Hyde Secretary of State, for the truth is, I can trust nobody else." He was to have replaced Nicholas, but declined the offer, saying that "his unskilfulness in languages, and his not understanding foreign affairs, rendered him very incapable of that trust." The King said, as Prime Ministers no doubt say now, "he would learn as much as was necessary of that kind very quickly." Later in the year, on Falkland's death, the offer was renewed, and again refused by Hyde although "he had so much more reason now, by the coming of a very specious Embassy from France, in the person of the Count of Harecourt." † The coming of specious Embassies is certainly the sort of reason which has often influenced men in favour of accepting high posts. Hyde, however, knew his own want of ability to act the part, for which "as far as the

\* *Life of Clarendon*, i. 143.

† *Ibid.* i. 176.

perfection of the French tongue could qualify him, the Lord Digby was very proper." And so Digby became Secretary of State.

In Cromwell's time there was a single Secretary of State, namely John Thurloe, who was so much a business secretary that, although he had served the two Protectors, he is said to have been invited by Charles II to return to office after the Restoration. The translation is doubtful; otherwise the arrangement would have been a sort of prototype of our modern system of permanency in the civil service. Pepys, by the way, speaks of Thurloe as being again chosen by the Parliament for Secretary of State in 1659, so that he was Secretary to the Parliament and not to the Protector. This, however, scarcely belongs to the history of the Office.

One might suppose that about this time a talent for poetical composition was one of the qualifications demanded of candidates for the Foreign Office, Milton's employment as Latin Secretary to Cromwell being one of the few pieces of common knowledge about the early history of that institution; but Sir Edward Troup throws a little cold water on the idea, by telling us that Milton and Dryden were not whole-time officials. Indeed, Milton's most important occupation was not to write poetry, but prose pamphlets in defence of his master's policy, and those not of the highest quality. Dr. Johnson tells us that, as Secretary to the Protector, Milton is supposed to have written the *Declaration of the Reasons for a War with Spain*; also, that his agency was considered as of great importance; for when a treaty with Sweden was artfully suspended,



the delay was publicly imputed to Mr. Milton's indisposition; and the Swedish Agent was provoked to express his wonder that only one man in England could write Latin, and that man blind. Whatever Milton's precise official status may have been, it is interesting to think of him working in what we may well call the Foreign Office in London, while Cowley on the other side of the Channel was ciphering and deciphering for Lord Jermyn.

To quote Sir Edward Troup again, Thurloe organised his staff on something like a modern basis. One of the members of the staff was yet a third poet, Andrew Marvell, and another was Samuel Morland, who is frequently mentioned by Pepys. Morland was anything but a popular personage, having betrayed both sides during the Protectorate; but he received the reward of his treachery from Charles II in the shape of a baronetcy, and excused himself for it by saying that Thurloe's bad usage made him do it. I hope I am right in saying that the only other instances of treachery in the Foreign Office are the Marvin case in the days of Lord Salisbury, and that of Gregg, who was hanged for corresponding with the French Government in 1708. Marvin was not actually a member of the staff, but he was employed in the Foreign Office and, in his book on *Our Public Offices*, he also has something to say about his "bad usage" there. Morland, before joining Thurloe's staff, had been employed in Whitelock's embassy to Sweden, and in a mission to the Duke of Savoy to remonstrate against the persecution of the Waldenses. Burke, in his account of the

Morland baronetcy,\* tells us that it was as an ingenious mechanic that his reputation stood highest, and amongst his inventions are enumerated the speaking trumpet,† the fire engine, a capstan for heavy anchors, and the steam-engine. "Others," adds Burke, "claim this great discovery, but the proofs in favour of Morland are extremely convincing." I have no space to continue Morland's interesting history, but if I may speak for my former colleagues, by all means let us claim to have produced both *Paradise Lost* and the Steam-Engine.

The precise arrangement of Thurloe's staff does not appear, but in 1665, if not earlier, there were Under Secretaries of State: Joseph Williamson being then appointed to that office. He is spoken of by Pepys as "Mr. Williamson that belongs to Sir H. Bennet," a description which might quite properly have been applied to some of his nineteenth century, but hardly to his twentieth century, descendants. Pepys found him a pretty understanding and accomplished man, but a little conceited. Before becoming Under Secretary he had been Keeper of the Papers, and later, in 1674, as already mentioned, he became Secretary of State, and held that office for four years. Although he sat in Parliament, he may perhaps be considered as one of the very few instances of a Secretary of State who has risen from the ranks. While he was still Under Secretary, Pepys met him at dinner at "the Swedes Agent's." "Here much extraordinary noble discourse of foreign princes." Surely any modern diplomat recognises the picture.

\* *Extinct Baronetcies.*

† This is preserved at Cambridge.

However small Thurloe's staff may have been, there was no material difference in numbers made till the end of the eighteenth century, although a greater degree of permanency was introduced before then.

In the reign of King William poetry was still in the ascendant in the Secretary of State's office, for Matthew Prior, who had previously had several diplomatic appointments, became Under Secretary in the Earl of Jersey's office in 1699 and 1700, though he did not retain the post more than a few months. He did, however, retain his connection with foreign affairs, for he became Commissioner of Trade, and later had other employment abroad, eventually becoming Ambassador at Paris. He was, as later Ambassadors have been, dissatisfied with his emoluments, and hinted to the Queen, "in an imperfect poem," \* that he had no service of plate.

While Prior helped to negotiate the Treaty of Ryswick, Joseph Addison began to qualify himself as Prior's successor by writing a Latin poem on the subject, and in 1706 he became an Under Secretary of State. He, too, did not stay long in the office; but he returned there as Secretary of State in 1717, bringing with him another poet, Tickell, as Under Secretary. He was a failure. Johnson, quoting Pope, says that Addison "could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. What he gained in rank he lost in credit; and finding by experience his own inability, was forced to solicit his dismissal, with a pension of fifteen hundred pounds a year."

\* Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*.

When I said just now that greater permanency was introduced into the Secretary of State's offices in the eighteenth century, I was thinking particularly of Edward Weston. The Weston Papers, published by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts,\* give us a very fair idea of the working of one Secretary of State's office, in so far as it was concerned with foreign affairs.

Edward Weston was born in 1703 and educated at Eton. His father was a Fellow of Eton, and afterwards Bishop of Exeter, and was the eponymous hero of Weston's yard, so familiar to Etonians. Edward was tutor to Lord Townshend's children and to Horace Walpole before joining the Secretary of State's office (Northern Department). Between 1729 and 1746 he was Under Secretary to Townshend, Harrington, Granville, and Chesterfield. He then became Chief Secretary for Ireland; but, at the earnest solicitation of Lord Bute, returned to the office in 1761 and remained there till 1764. In 1741, while still Under Secretary, he was made editor of the *Gazette*, and was generally known afterwards as the *Gazetteer*. This connexion between the Foreign Office and the *Gazette* remained a close one till well on in the nineteenth century. The Alnage Office was also granted to Weston in 1748, there being then and for many years no objection to such a cumulation of offices.

This long continuance in office was no matter of course. In 1736, writing from the Cockpit in Whitehall, he begged Lord Harrington to keep him in his post. Lord Harrington in his reply says :

\* Vol. X.

"I am no stranger to your character, which has been represented to me in so advantageous a light by all that know you that I shall think myself very happy in having your assistance in the execution of my employment, and will endeavour to make everything as agreeable to you as possible."

The co-operation was most successful, for in 1738 Lord Harrington ends a letter to Weston thus: "it is impossible to be more affectionately and more sincerely than I am, dear Weston, yours ever." In the same style is a letter written much later in 1762 by George Grenville:

"I cannot return the draughts of the circular letters upon my leaving the office of Secretary of State, without writing you a few lines, which are neither formal nor circular, but are designed to convey to you my sincerest and kindest thanks for your assistance to me in the execution of that laborious office, and to testify to you in this manner the sense I have of your merit and conduct towards me and to desire the continuance of your friendship. I saw Lord Halifax, who expressed his most earnest wish you should remain with him upon the same footing you was with me." Lord Halifax, when Weston finally retired, was equally affectionate and enthusiastic.

During all these years Weston was in constant and friendly correspondence with British representatives in foreign countries and, with his long experience, must have had some little influence with chiefs to whom he stood in a relation of such affectionate intimacy. Nevertheless, I gather that he restricted himself mainly to routine work, and

that it was his industry and amiability rather than great talent that kept him so long in his place. From his industry he actually suffered. When applying to the Duke of Newcastle for a grant of the Alnage Office, "for such term of years as the King in his great wisdom and princely regard to an old, laborious and faithful servant of the Crown shall judge to be expedient," he represents that "he has served His Majesty's Royal Great-Grandfather and Grandfather (George I and II) in the Secretary's Office for the space of twenty years, and contracted therein, by his sedentary application to Public Business, the very painful Distemper of the Stone."

If he did sometimes make suggestions he seems to have done so with humility. In 1761 he writes to Bute: "I most humbly desire Your Lordship to consider the draught to the East India Directors as I have inserted something in it according to my own notions, purely for your consideration." Sometimes he found himself in a predicament which has had later parallels. He writes in 1762 to George Grenville: "They are at a loss at the office what to do as you have not sent back the letter to Mr. Boreel, not knowing whether you have approved and signed it or not, and consequently whether they may send the copy to Sir Joseph Yorke, as mentioned in your letter to His Excellency." Lord Halifax in 1762 seems to ask for a little, but a very little, more than mere facts: he asks for papers relating to a memorial by the King of Prussia: "Put me in the right course of study and I shall be able to get through a good deal tomorrow and Sunday." The

highest praise of Weston's work is very much what would be given nowadays to a highly trained shorthand writer. Lord Shelburne \* observed that "Mr. Weston was Under Secretary to Lord Granville, who was in the habit of giving the heads of what he would have wrote to Mr. Weston and never had occasion to alter one word, except on some occasion a who for a which; it was most difficult to say to whom this did more honour, to Lord Granville or Mr. Weston. Lord Chatham, on the other hand, made an intolerable labour of it, as will be seen by his despatches which will be found to be more of speeches."

We are told that Mr. Weston was no politician, and never went out of his office; a statement which bears out his own account of himself.

The fact is that Weston, and other Under Secretaries of the eighteenth century, were very much in the position of the private secretary of to-day, and the whole staff of his office, not exceeding a dozen during most of the century, was not much more numerous than the private secretaries and shorthand writers who now form the personal staff of the Secretary of State. At the same time, there was the same friendly relation between the staff at home and the men abroad that has existed ever since. Trevor writes to Weston from The Hague: "My compliments to Tilson, Waad, and all friends at the office," and in another letter refers to his old friends and fellow-labourers in Scotland Yard, while diplomats were constantly writing to thank Weston for kindness and help.

\* *Autobiography*, p. 43.

In one respect the authorities showed more consideration for the staff than would be the case to-day. Cecil Jenkinson, Bute's private secretary, tells Weston in 1762 that he has kept back "the other draughts that they may be copied tonight fair for signing that the clerks may have leisure to go to Church to-morrow."

Weston, it is interesting to know, was, like many other Under Secretaries, a classical scholar and a poet; at any rate he wrote a Latin Ode on the marriage of George III; helped the Honourable Thomas Townshend to compose a Latin epitaph on his brother, and published a volume called *Diaspora*. Soon after his retirement a friend believes that he labours as much on Greek criticism and books as if he was in office; on the other hand, Warburton\* says: "Weston, the son of the late Bishop of Exeter, the present Gazetteer by profession, by inclination a Methodist and connected with Thomas and Sherlock, is writing against my conclusion of the dedication to the Jews concerning naturalisation. It seems he wrote in defence of that Bill. The father was tutor to Walpole, and the son is one of his pupils. I am afraid he will be a sharer in that silent contempt with which I treat my answerers!"

Weston, however, had a more important enemy than this; for the tenth letter of Junius (1769) is addressed to him, and he is abused also in the ninth letter as the author of a pamphlet in defence of the Duke of Grafton, an authorship which Weston

\* Horace Walpole's *Short Notes of My Life*. Note by Cunningham.



himself disclaimed. Junius speaks of him as an old man without the benefit of experience, and a volunteer with the stipend of twenty commissions; but says that he will not "descend to an altercation either with the impotence of your age, or the peevishness of your diseases."

We need not assume that Junius was speaking the truth, but the immediate interest of the point is that Sir Philip Francis had served in the other Secretary of State's office under Chatham, and the fact of his having been employed in the Foreign Office and the War Office is among the reasons for attributing the Letters to him. He had been recommended for employment on account of his perfect knowledge of French.

I have spoken at some length of Weston, but there was an equally well-known Under Secretary in the other (Southern) department, namely, Robert Wood. Also a scholar and author, he served Chatham as Under Secretary from 1757 to 1761, and, like Williamson in Pepys's time, was spoken of as Mr. Pitt's Wood.\* He was a great traveller, and published books on the ruins of Palmyra of Baalbec among others. In 1763 he organised for the Society of Dilettanti, of which he was a member, the party sent by the Society to explore the ancient state of the countries in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor. He was more self-assertive than Weston, but less popular. While Weymouth was Secretary of State he managed the entire business of both Northern and Southern Departments. He left Pitt in 1761 because he was offended by the haughty

\* *Dictionary of National Biography.*

treatment which he received from the great man, and was elected to Parliament. Subsequently he became Chief Secretary for Ireland, but the Irish objected to his mean birth and public and private character. Objection could hardly be more comprehensive. I understand that Wood's life has just been written by Professor Hecht of Göttingen.

Chatham's staff consisted only of two Under Secretaries and nine clerks, although they had some help from the office of the Keeper of the Papers which served both departments. While he was Secretary of State the staff were not to be envied. He allowed no one to take any responsibility, and trifling faults were visited with terrible reproaches. Wood's servant having lost a despatch, Chatham (Pitt at the time) speaks\* of the occurrence as "the most overwhelming misfortune and disgrace to himself, and of all events the most distressful that has yet happened to me in the course of my life."

Some of Chatham's despatches, though they may resemble speeches, contain personal touches which show how little others had to do with their composition.

In a despatch to Keene in 1757,† he says: "The most important and confidential matter which I have the Honour of the King's Commands to open in this Dispatch, and His Majesty's Orders and Instructions relative to the same herewith transmitted, cannot but affect Your Excellency with the deepest Sense of the great and particular Trust which

\* *Life of Lord Chatham* (B. Williams), i. 328.

† *Weston Papers*. (The subject was the contemplated exchange of Gibraltar for Minorca.)

the King is most graciously pleased to repose in Your Excellency's known experience, and long approved abilities : and it is greatly hoped that the state of Your Excellency's Health will be found so well restored by the Use of Medicinal Waters as to leave nothing more to desire for the proper and ablest Discharge of a Commission of such high Moment and which peculiarly demands the utmost Circumspection, Vigilance, Delicacy and Address."

If we may judge by modern standards no underling, even an Under Secretary of State, would venture on such awe-inspiring language, or, I may say, introduce a reference to the use of medicinal waters into so eloquent an exordium.

Francis himself, as might be expected of the author of Junius, was not much abashed in the presence of the great man. When some of Pitt's colleagues could not see a point, he, somewhat insultingly to them, told Francis,\* who was in the room as his amanuensis, to explain it, and Francis did so ; and on another occasion,† on a point of Latin grammar, he exclaimed, " Ask the St. Paul's boy," and Francis again justified his confidence.

Pitt organised his office, which was in Cleveland Row, with great care. He had a précis made of all negotiations and business in hand when he came into office, and he arranged an exhaustive system of recording any order and letter under headings.

From this, and from the high praise given to Weston by his chiefs, we may assume that both departments were, by the middle of the eighteenth

\* *Life of Lord Chatham* (B. Williams), i. 333.

† *Ibid.* i. 328.

century, fairly well organised, although discipline seems to have fallen off somewhat later.

The inconvenience of having two, or rather three, offices still remained, but so far as direction of business was concerned the difficulty was overcome by one Secretary of State being overshadowed by the other: Newcastle, by Townshend; his successors, except Carteret, by Newcastle in his turn; then Holderness by Pitt. Carteret said of Pelham\*: "He was only chief clerk to Sir Robert Walpole. Why should he expect to be more under me? He did his drudgery and he shall do mine." Pitt found that he could direct German affairs from the Southern as well as from the Northern Department, and it was he apparently who received all the foreign Ambassadors and Ministers.

Granville, or Carteret as he was during his first term of office, was an exception to other rules. He was a good linguist, who owed his favour with George II to the fact that he could talk German. He had, too, a great idea of the importance of his office. "What is it to me," he asked,† "who is judge or bishop? It is my business to make Kings and Emperors and to maintain the balance of Europe." Perhaps it was an excessive opinion of his own sufficiency that made him send a foreign protégé of his, Sir Luke Schaub, as Ambassador to Paris.

Suffolk was at the other extreme, and made it a condition‡ of accepting office that he should not be required to attend the Cabinet.

\* *Life of Lord Chatham*, i. 99.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Lecky*, iii. 168.

Many of the Secretaries of State were quite young when they took office : Grafton and Shelburne were twenty-nine ; Newcastle, Grenville and Harrowby thirty-one. Nevertheless, except for Newcastle, who did the work of Stone,\* his Under Secretary, while Stone did his, they were not inclined to leave much to their subordinates.

When Weston left the Northern Department his friends kept him well supplied with gossip about the new arrangements. He heard how Lovel Stanhope was invited to accept the post of Under Secretary to the Duke of Grafton, but declined when he found that he was expected to give his whole attendance to the office, and to do the business of the first clerk, Mr. Richardson, who was quite worn out and incapable, while Mr. Stonehewer only was to attend His Grace's person and receive his commands.

This Stonehewer spent fifty-three years in the most uninterrupted attachment, confidence, and friendship with the Duke, but, though a friend of Gray and Walpole, he was little more than a copyist. Eventually Mr. Bourke was appointed Under Secretary to Mr. Conway and Mr. Fraser, then, or soon afterwards, Under Secretary in the Northern Department along with Stonehewer.

Mr. Bourke, who had been Secretary of Guadeloupe, was said to be a man of considerable ability, while Mr. Fraser is described as "punctuality and care itself." Another man in the Northern Department was Morin, who had been in the office since 1741 and had been Under Secretary to Lord

\* *Life of Lord Chatham*, i. 327.

Holderness. I gather from this that a man was not once an Under Secretary always an Under Secretary, any more than at the end of the nineteenth century a man was once a Private Secretary always a Private Secretary. Morin, who is described by Weston to the Secretary of State as "your laborious and faithful servant," was made happy as many Foreign Office clerks have been made happy since, by having his son admitted to the office in 1765. Laborious, but without ambition, he could not and would not prepare drafts.

Fraser had a long career in the Foreign Office, and was there at and after its constitution as a single department.\*

The Foreign Office then, before 1782, was divided into two departments ruled over by two Secretaries of State, each with ten to twelve clerks and, at the head of this humble staff, two Under Secretaries, in positions much like those of the modern Private Secretary. One Secretary of State was established in an inadequate building at Whitehall; the other in an inadequate building at St. James's. They shared the services of the Keeper of the Papers and his staff. The work was done sufficiently well; partly because it was easily within the grasp of a reasonably able Secretary of State, even though he also dealt with affairs which now occupy several Ministers. Foreign affairs were limited, practically speaking, to Europe. Turkey was dealt with mainly by the Levant Company. There were no Balkan States, and business necessarily marched slowly.

The Foreign Ministers in London doubtless gave

\* Wraxall's *Memoirs*, i. 113.

the Office a good deal of trouble, and they were apt to have more causes of complaint than occur now. During the Gordon riots the chapels of the Scandinavian and Bavarian Ministers were plundered, and during the Wilkes riots the Austrian Ambassador was dragged from his coach and had "45" chalked on his shoes. Moreover, foreign diplomats often intrigued with the Opposition of the day to an extent which caused considerable anxiety to the Secretary of State.

The following list of salaries illustrate the smallness of the scale on which the business of foreign affairs was conducted :

*Office Salaries settled by Lord Weymouth\* for the Northern Department in 1769.*

	Office Salary.	From Post Office.
Mr. Shadwell ...	£170	£110
Mr. Wace ...	30	110
Mr. Wright ...	100	100
Mr. Taylor ...	100	70
Mr. Broughton ...	80	—
Mr. Aust † ...	80	70
Mr. Cook ...	50	—
Mr. Bidwell ...	50	40
Mr. Deyverdun ...	50	—

These salaries were eked out, in some cases much more than eked out, by remuneration for other

\* R.O., F.O., 95/591.

† Afterwards Under Secretary.

office work or by sinecures. Among the posts that were held about this time by Foreign Office clerks were those of Methodiser and Arranger of the Augmentation Office, Keeper of the Records in the Tower, and Receiver-General of Sixpenny Deductions. Clerks also received certain presents on the occasion of the signature of treaties. The number of salaries paid from Post Office funds was limited, as we find the Under Secretary (Eden) promising a correspondent that his salary shall be raised from the next Post Office money vacant. In addition to the nine clerks there were also two Under Secretaries and a First Clerk, who corresponded to the present Assistant Under Secretary, with slightly higher salaries. Not a very splendid establishment.

I add a petition to the Secretary of State \* which, allowing for the more grandiloquent style of the period, suggests the relation in which the Minister stood to his subordinates.

*To the Lord Viscount Stormont, His Majesty's  
Principal Secretary of State, etc., etc., etc.*

The humble Petition of Thomas  
Bidwell, one of the Clerks in  
Your Lordship's Office.

*Sheweth,—*

**T**HAT in the year 1765, your Petitioner had the Honor to be appointed a Clerk in the Department in which Your Lordship now presides; from which Time to the present Hour your Petitioner has never absented himself from his official

\* Chief Clerk's Papers.



Duty, on account of any other Employment or Avocation whatsoever.

That the Emoluments of Office hitherto enjoyed by your Petitioner being far from adequate to the decent support of himself and a numerous family, he has been under the necessity of sinking a considerable Part of his private Fortune, not doubting but that, as vacancies happened in the Office, he should from Time to Time succeed to the same Salaries on the Establishment as were received by his Predecessors.

That your Petitioner humbly hoped, from the Regulations which have obtained in the Office with respect to Absentees for these ten years past, and more especially from the late Earl of Suffolk's particular notification to Mr. Aust upon the last Arrangement in August 1775, that on the late Dismission of Mr. Wright, Your Petitioner would certainly have been considered as entitled to the Rank of *Third Clerk* on the Establishment with such Salary as has been usually annexed to that Station.

But your Petitioner with the utmost humility begs leave to represent to your Lordship, that, by Mr. Broughton's unexpected Return to the Office, he not only finds himself defeated in such his just Expectations, but also excluded from the Encrease of Salary usually allotted to the Rank of *Fourth Clerk*; which will clearly appear to Your Lordship from the Office Establishment as settled in 1769, with the several Alterations therein since that Period, which Your Petitioner most humbly intreats Your Lordship's Indulgence to be permitted to lay before you.

Nothing but the firmest Reliance on your Lordship's well-known Benevolence & Humanity could embolden Your Petitioner to intrude thus far on Your Lordship's Patience, and to implore your favorable Attention to his very hard Case After near Fifteen Years constant Attendance in the office, after seeing his once considerable Profits upon franking News Papers nearly annihilated by means of new Regulations at the Post Office, and after actually sinking £1,000 of his private Fortune, tho' he has ever lived with the strictest frugality, he now finds himself, with a Wife and Four Children, and no other Income arising from any Employments than the Office Salary of £60 with the allowance of £85 from the Post Office, which latter to complete his Misfortunes has been reduced these two years past by the Deduction of the Land Tax to £68 (the Relief granted on that account to other Departments having been hitherto solicited in vain) making together no more than £128; whilst, if he may presume to request Your Lordship to cast Your Eye on the Establishment annexed, you will be pleased observe, that the *Third* and even the *Fourth* Clerk (if on Duty) has not for these last Ten years enjoyed an Office Salary of less than £100, besides the share of the Post Office allowance, amounting in the whole, in the least Instance of Mr. Taylor, in 1769, to £170 per annum.

Most humbly intreating Your Lordship's Pardon for this Intrusion, Your Petitioner hopes he shall not give offence by Submitting the circumstances of a Case so peculiarly hard to Your Lordship's Consideration, in humble confidence of obtaining

such Relief from Your Lordship's Protection, as Your truly noble and generous Sentiments cannot fail to induce you to grant, in his distressed situation.

*And your Petitioner as in Duty bound  
shall ever pray.*

## Chapter II \*

### THE FIRST FOREIGN OFFICE

THE division of foreign affairs between two Secretaries of State became in course of time, in spite of the mitigating circumstances which I have ventured to plead, so obviously inconvenient that, in 1782, the whole business was placed under one Minister, and the Foreign Office, properly so-called, came into existence.

The first Secretary of State was Charles James Fox, and Sheridan came with him as Under Secretary. We may suppose that the staff heard the news of these appointments with pleasure and even something like amusement. The reign was, however, short-lived. Fox, after a few months, was succeeded by Lord Grantham; less than a year later Fox returned, and in December 1783 again gave way, this time to Lord Carmarthen, afterwards Duke of Leeds, who held office for eight years. William Fraser may be described as Permanent Under Secretary for the period 1782 to 1789.

\* Most of the material for the early history of the Foreign Office, where authorities are not specifically mentioned, has been found in F.O. 95/591 and 366/542 (Record Office), in F.O. Confidential General 4, and among a number of loose papers preserved in the Chief Clerk's department.

The staff of the Office included in addition a Chief Clerk and nine clerks.

The Under Secretary (there was for the moment only one) had a salary of only £500, but fees (£427, 14s. 2d.), gratuities, and perquisites made his emoluments up to £2254, 17s. 4d. These emoluments included £270 as writer of the Gazette, £218 as Clerk of the Signet, £90 as Patent King's Waiter. He also received £50 from the Irish Concordatum, a fund charged on the Irish revenues from which payments for many miscellaneous services were made, including, at one time, according to *Murray's English Dictionary*, the killing or apprehension of Tories. Finally, he received for a time £300 as German translator.

Of the clerks one received £172, 12s. as Agent for the Grenadas, £240 as joint Registrar-General of the House Duty for London and Middlesex, £250 as Registrar of Seizures.

As an instance of the Treaty presents which formed part of their income, we may take the Treaty signed with the Landgrave of Hesse in 1796, when £250 was divided between the staff, the Under Secretary receiving £150, the Chief Clerk £29, 1s. 6d. and others smaller sums down to £2, 1s. 6d.

It is not perhaps, immaterial to mention that the Under Secretaries seem to have received a considerable number of presents in kind from their friends abroad. Mr. Burges (Under Secretary)\*, in 1792, thanks Lord Auckland (as he shortly afterwards became) for a fresh cargo of herrings, and in July of that year tells a tradesman named Cooper that

\* *Bland Burges Papers*, 17th August 1792.

his stationery was too dear, and that for the future the custom must be discontinued of giving almanacs and pocket books at Christmas to the Secretary of State, gentlemen of the Office and their servants. Earlier in the century, too, in 1762, there came from the Embassy at St. Petersburg four bottles of tea for Lord Bute, two for Weston and two for Jenkinson, and for Weston also thirty of the best Archangel dried tongues. About the same time came some "very curious Rhubarb"; a parcel for the King, another for Lord Bute, one for Weston, and one for Lord Mansfield.

In addition to the Foreign Office staff proper there was the staff of the State Paper Office, with Sir Stainer Porter as keeper of State Papers; Thomas Ramsden as Transmitter of State Papers and Secretary of the Latin Language with 42 years' service, two Commissioners of State Papers, Sir Francis Willes and Edward Willes, with respectively 30 and 45 years' service, as decipherers; William Fraser (the Under Secretary), one Gazette writer, and George Aust as his deputy. The State Paper Office, however, also served the Home Department.

I have omitted from the Foreign Office staff the two Chamber Keepers and the "necessary woman," who, in one year, received £19, 10s. for old pens and bits of tallow candles; but the whole staff is not very different from what it probably was a hundred years earlier. Even so, the staff was not always occupied: as at a much later date, they had busy times, and slack times when they did not all attend the office. This arrangement was regularised in

1789\* when it was declared to be indispensably necessary for the proper conduct of business that the Clerks in the Office should attend regularly. The two junior clerks not on leave were to be in constant rotation, one each night, but on the foreign post nights and those days when the Dutch and Flanders mails arrived, all were to attend. The regular hours were 11 to 4, and from 8 until such time as the necessary business should be finished.

According to a report drawn up for a Committee of the House of Commons in 1786,† one of the Under Secretaries was to be permanent and one nominated by the Secretary of State to act confidentially for him. All were to take the oath of secrecy. The offices for the two departments and the Paper Office were to be under one roof. Clerks were to have fixed salaries and no perquisites except the right of franking newspapers. There were to be no Foreign Office Agents for Ministers abroad. Nothing much came of this. The Secretary of State‡ objected to the first and second of these recommendations; to the second, on the strange ground that an oath was likely to "attach criminality upon the most innocent conversations." He also insisted on retaining the agency system, which was only abolished a great many years later, and by 1795 nothing had yet been done about finding new offices, the archives remaining in an "ancient, feeble, and ruinous, though spacious building." It is noted that the office of the Secretary of State

\* F.O. Conf. Gen. 4.

† Attached to Order in Council of 27th February 1795.

‡ F.O. 336.

for Foreign Affairs had been in three different situations in fifteen years, and was still in a private house. At the moment it was in Downing Street, where two houses belonging to Lord Sheffield and Sir Samuel Hodges were occupied, the office having been removed there in 1793 from the Cockpit at Whitehall.

The whole cost of the establishment in 1782-1783, excluding contingencies, was £14,178.

	£	s.	d.
Secretary of State's salary ...	5,680	0	0
Profit of <i>Gazette</i> ...	282	0	0
Fees ...	2,186	0	0
Two Under Secretaries at £500	1,000	0	0
Fees ...	1,419	6	8
Allowance by Act of 1769 ...	750	0	0
Fees of First Clerk ...	851	0	0
Salaries of Clerks and Tradesmen's bills ...	1,510	0	0
Franking ...	500	0	0
	<u>£14,178</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>

The expenses were paid out of the Civil List under Order in Council, and the members of the office made an affidavit as to their emoluments before a Baron of the Exchequer. Applications for an increase of salary were made to His Majesty in Council. The fees mentioned were mainly on the issue of passports. When passports were invented is uncertain, but there was a passport office at Whitehall in Cromwell's time. Letters of safe-conduct were issued long before that.



Changes in the salary list were slow. In 1795 Grenville only received £3,200 as Secretary of State, having also £4,000 as Auditor of the Exchequer in that year. Thomas Bidwell had £70 for franking newspapers and £200 as superintendent of St. James's and Hyde Parks. Contingencies in 1795 were £9,919, chiefly for the Messenger Service, but including £1,075 for pensions. John Barn, who was Keeper of Papers and Latin Secretary, explains that his duty in the latter capacity was to compare Acts drawn up in Latin with the translation, whether made by the Home or by Foreign Governments, and to write what Acts were required. A new cipher, a rare event, cost £150.

The initial salary of the Under Secretaries was fixed at £2,000 by Order in Council in 1799, and that of the Political Under Secretary reduced again to £1,500 in 1840.

Carmarthen is said by Lecky \* to have conducted foreign affairs with dignity and knowledge, but without great zeal.

Our representatives abroad were then, and indeed in later days, apt to complain of indifference on the part of the Secretary of State in his office.

Lecky † quotes a letter from Sir James Harris, ‡ Minister at The Hague, to Mr. Ewart, who was Secretary at Berlin, in which he says: "Our principals at home are too much occupied with the House of Commons to attend to what passes on the Continent; and if any good is ever done there, it must be effected through the King's Ministers

\* *History of England*, v. 34.

† *Ibid.* v. 82.

‡ The celebrated diplomatist who was created Earl of Malmesbury.

abroad and not by those about his person : Long experience has taught me this, and I never yet received an instruction that was worth reading." To this, Lecky compares a statement made by Burke, who wrote in 1791 : "I have long been persuaded that those in power here, instead of governing their Ministers at foreign Courts, are entirely swayed by them. That corps has no one point of manly policy in their whole system ; they are a corps of intriguers, who sooner or later will turn our offices into an academy of cabal and confusion."

Sir Robert Keith, Minister at Vienna, complained \* that at the time when the entry of the Emperor into the Turkish War had made the relations of England to the Court of Vienna peculiarly delicate, critical, and difficult, he was left for five whole months without a single line of instructions on public affairs, and that no less than fifty-two successive despatches which he had written remained unanswered. On an average he obtained one answer to about forty despatches.

In 1786, Eden †, when negotiating a commercial treaty at Paris, known subsequently as the East India Convention, lamented bitterly the delay in sending him instructions, and almost as bitterly the arrival of a Messenger bringing, instead of the expected instructions, a jocose private letter from Lord Carmarthen, "for the purpose of telling you we are alive and well." That same private letter, by the way, refers to a habit, practised by easy-going foreign representatives, of sending home cuttings from the newspapers instead of original

\* *Lecky*, v. 239. † (The first Lord Auckland.) *Bland Burges Papers*.

information. One Italian Minister is recorded as having been used to cut out a couple of columns of one of the newspapers for the information of his Sovereign, and usher in the contents of his despatch with a "Ho penetrato." That Minister became Minister of Foreign Affairs. In later days the same habit has at times prevailed, but with less success. Eden was not amused by Carmarthen's letter. He was "confoundly disappointed" when the Messenger delivered a private letter "without a syllable either official or private respecting my eternal treaty!"

Instructions and advice, when they did come, were nearly always contained in letters from Pitt himself: only very formal instructions, though drafted by Pitt, were signed by Carmarthen. Stratford Canning, at Constantinople between 1810 and 1812, when Lord Wellesley was Secretary of State, made the same kind of complaint as Harris and Auckland, and was so exasperated by Wellesley's behaviour that when next in London he refused to call upon him. When taken to Wellesley's door by a mutual friend, his repugnance was so great that at the last moment he could not bring himself to go in.\*

This was an age-long grievance. When Arlington was made Secretary of State,† British representatives were delighted, because at last they had a Minister who answered letters.

Similar complaints, although I hope with not such strong feelings as Canning's, have been made

\* *Life of Stratford Canning* (Lane Poole), i. 193.

† Bryant's *Charles II.*

in very much later times, for instance, by Sir Robert Morier in 1881.\*

It is interesting to note that Carmarthen, at any rate, could be as uncommunicative in dealing with foreign Ministers as with British. John Adams, the first American Minister to London, found the silence of the Minister most embarrassing. He was received by Carmarthen as often as he wished, and encouraged to develop his arguments on all sorts of matters—on slavery, on tariffs, on the debts of various States to England—but the response was a silence complete and impenetrable. The walls alone echoed his remarks.† For three years British silence was unvaried.

In the eighteenth century, at least, if the Secretaries of State failed sometimes to keep in proper touch with their representatives abroad, the Under Secretaries were usually prolific in private correspondence. We have seen, too, that the two offices were managed with some efficiency. The creation of a single department does not seem to have improved matters. According to Burges ‡ (afterwards Sir James Burges Lamb), a terrible state of slackness existed in the office when he became one of the Under Secretaries in 1789.

He writes to his wife : “ The immense number of despatches which come from agents to Foreign Courts are filed up in large presses, but no note of them is taken, nor is there even an index to them ; so that, if anything is wanted, the whole year’s

\* *Life of Sir Charles Dilke* (Gwynn and Tuckwell), i. 417.

† *History of American Foreign Relations* (Sears), p. 44.

‡ *Bland Burges Papers*.

accumulation must be rummaged over before it can be found, and frequently material concerns must be forgotten for want of a Memorandum to preserve their sense. As to the past, it would be a Herculean task to attempt to put things right; but it is my intention to take better care in future, and to enter the purport of every despatch in a volume properly prepared for that purpose. By this means the Duke will be enabled at a glance to recollect everything that has passed, and public affairs will be reduced to a regularity they have never yet attained."

Burges, who was consumed with vanity, did not know that the same practice had been followed by Chatham and possibly by others, but there is no reason to doubt the truth of his description of things as he found them. He was himself a great worker and speaks of being at the office at ten and remaining there, "incessantly employed (except about three hours engaged in dining with the Duke) till half-past twelve at night." This was, perhaps, exceptional, but his hours were usually long. The clerks did not like this reforming spirit, and declared that his innovation would be intolerably burdensome and quite beyond their powers of endurance, but Burges assured them that he should himself undertake the additional labour. From a letter to Auckland of 1793 (written from the office at midnight), it is clear that he did so, for he speaks of Auckland's correspondence as being among that of which it was his duty to keep a précis. His first colleague, Ryder, was like himself a Member of Parliament, so that there was no Permanent Under

Secretary at the time. Burges did the work of one and Ryder did nothing. The King was reported to have said of Ryder that it was extremely strange that an Under Secretary, within a fortnight of his appointment, should be roving about the country to races and watering-places instead of attending to his duty. Nevertheless, although his tenure of the Under Secretaryship was short, Ryder, as Lord Harrowby, returned to the office as Secretary of State in 1804.

In 1790 Mr. George Aust, one of the permanent staff, became Burges's colleague, but does not seem to have made much mark on the office.

It was from Burges that Edmund Burke procured the dagger with which he made such a sensation in the House of Commons, by flinging it on the floor of the House as an example of the boons which England might expect from the prevailing revolutionary spirit. Burke had called at the Foreign Office, where Burges showed him a dagger which had been sent to Birmingham, with an order to make a large quantity after the same pattern. We may note with satisfaction that the dagger, having served its turn, was duly returned to the Foreign Office, but it was subsequently removed by Burges, and handed down by him to his son.

It was Burges, too, who wrote to Lord Auckland, after the final defeat of Tippoo Sahib in 1792 : "Thank God ! we have once more shut the temple of Janus. May it be long before we open it again ! For my own part, I do not see any object immediately likely to give any occasion. Hitherto

the star of Pitt has been so prevalent that I depend upon it like an Arabian astrologer."

In the opinion of some critics British diplomacy is always blind ; in the opinion of others it is engaged in a succession of intrigues, and so precipitates disasters which armies are called in to repair. In point of fact British diplomats do what they are told and probably always have done in the large majority of instances ; or if, like Keith, they have at times been left without instructions, they have developed what they know to be the main purpose of their Government. It is more remarkable that this country has so often kept out of war than that it has occasionally been driven to make war, not by the intrigues of its representatives abroad, but, as in the Napoleonic Wars and the Great War, by the march of events outside their scope of action.

Carmarthen, now Duke of Leeds, resigned on 8th June 1791. Dignified and well informed as he may have been, he was obviously not a worker himself or inclined to make others work. Possibly the staff felt that they had had an exceptionally easy time under his rule ; possibly they had some finer reason for regarding him with affection and admiration : however this may be, they took the unusual step of presenting a portrait of him to the Duchess when he retired. The portrait was by Lawrence, and a photograph of it forms the frontispiece of Sir Edward Hertslet's *Recollections of the Old Foreign Office*. If I may for once speak familiarly of living persons, I will add here that the present heir to the dukedom served in the Foreign Office under Lord Curzon, who was pleased with his work,

and told me that "he liked his breezy irresponsibility," qualities suggested also by the letter from his ancestor to Eden which I have already quoted.

Leeds asserted his independence at last by refusing to sign despatches prepared by Pitt, and, on resigning his post, was succeeded in June 1791 by Grenville. According to Dr. Clapham,\* Pitt's personal incursions into the affairs of the Foreign Office then became less frequent, but only because of the complete identity of views between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. Owing to Grenville's great industry Pitt could be certain that their common policy would receive prompt expression and execution. Mr. Algernon Cecil, likewise writing in the *Cambridge History of Foreign Policy*, speaks on the other hand, of serious conflict between Pitt and Grenville, in every instance of which the Prime Minister prevailed. According to Sir Charles Petrie,† Canning, when he became Under Secretary early in 1796, took a prominent part in the French negotiations, acting for Pitt against his own chief, and gaining thereby an undesirable reputation for intrigue.

We may assume that Grenville was less popular with his staff than Leeds, not, let us hope, because he was so industrious, but because ‡ of his coldness and reserve and his incompetence in the management of men. It was in his reign, which lasted for ten years, that the Office was moved to Downing Street, when it spread over the houses of Lord

\* *Cambridge History of Foreign Policy*, i. 158.

† *Life of George Canning*, p. 21.

‡ *Cambridge History of Foreign Policy*, iii. p. 545.



Sheffield and Sir Samuel Hodges. This office, which is fully described in Sir Edward Hertslet's *Recollections* and in the *Cambridge History of Foreign Policy*, was a wretched building quite unsuitable for its purpose, but it had some fine rooms for the Secretary of State and the Under Secretaries, and additional lustre was lent to it by the fact that Cabinet meetings were held there.

In 1795 Grenville, with great difficulty, succeeded in ousting Burges from his place. Burges, with all his zeal, was too self-important to be popular, but he succeeded in obtaining, as the price of his departure, a baronetcy, a pension of £1,500 a year, and the office of Knight-Marshal. Incidentally he too was a poet, but an indifferent one.

He was succeeded by George Hammond, friend of George Canning, who became Hammond's colleague early in the following year. Canning, who was only twenty-five, had Hammond for a colleague not only in his work at the Foreign Office but, a few years later, as a contributor to the *Anti-Jacobin*. According to Lord Burghersh's copy of that work, Canning, Frere (also Under Secretary at the Foreign Office in 1799), and Hammond were jointly responsible for "La Sainte Guillotine," and Hammond had a share in some of the other contributions; but Edmonds, in his edition of the *Anti-Jacobin*, thinks it "probable that Hammond did not write one line, certainly not of verse."

Hammond had already held an important diplomatic appointment, for, in 1791, at the early age of twenty-eight, he had been sent as the first British Minister to the United States. An unknown

correspondent writes from Philadelphia to William Windham,\* in 1793, "I have often seen here your Minister, Mr. Hammond, and your Consul. The first is an exceeding good man, true, open, very much attached to the interests of his country." Hammond was again employed abroad later on several occasions; retired in 1806; was reappointed to the Foreign Office in 1807, and finally retired at the Government's resignation in 1809.

In the early Foreign Office Lists, Hammond and his predecessor Aust are described as Permanent. The two Under Secretaries were not, however, one Permanent and one Parliamentary as now: Aust and Fraser before him had been many years in the Office and were more or less permanencies: the second Under Secretary was usually a personal friend of the Secretary of State for the time being, but not necessarily a Member of Parliament. Burges had been described as Confidential Under Secretary. Hammond, though more or less permanent, was also a confidential or personal selection. Later, Cooke † was a personal friend of Castlereagh, but not a Member of Parliament any more than his quasi-permanent colleague Hamilton.

A little light is thrown on the discipline of the Office in 1802, ‡ when it was still evidently not very strict, by a note on the duties of the first senior clerk. He was to continue to distribute, under the directions of the Principal and Under Secretaries, the general business of the Office, and it was to be

\* *Windham Papers*, i. 136.

† *Cambridge History of Foreign Policy*, iii. 554.

‡ F.O. Conf. Gen., 4.

deemed "a breach of official duty tending to impede the due execution of the business of the department, if a clerk should refuse or delay coming to receive his work or fail to return it finished in all respects in a correct and official manner." Faults must have been rather common to make such instructions necessary.

The system of keeping papers at this time is explained in an instruction of Lord Grenville's of 7th April 1799. Every three months there was a sort of round up, and papers were restored to their proper places; in time the previous year's papers were bound. All papers prior to 1793 had to go to the Paper Office.

Canning became Secretary of State in March 1807, and it was then that Hammond returned to the Office with Lord FitzHarris as his colleague. Canning's young cousin, Stratford, afterwards famous as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, was Précis Writer. Their period of office was not long, and they were succeeded in 1809 by Lord Bathurst as Secretary of State, and William Hamilton as Under Secretary.

Hamilton, who was a Harrovian, was otherwise famous for his share in acquiring for this country the Elgin Marbles, and as a founder of the Royal Geographical Society. His term of office lasted till 1822.

Edmond Hammond later spoke of his father as having been turned out of office when the Whigs came in.\* Bathurst was succeeded two months later by Lord Wellesley, who was an indolent

\* Report of Select Committee, 1861, Qn. 468.

Minister, and then in 1812 came Lord Castlereagh, to remain in office for ten years. Lord Castlereagh brought with him as Under Secretary his devoted friend, Edward Cooke, an Etonian. Even at this period the Under Secretaries were still in a position in some respects not unlike that of the Private Secretaries to-day.

The division of work was simple ; One Under Secretary took the Northern Department, and one the Southern Department, the old distribution having to this extent survived. On Castlereagh's accession, Cooke took the Northern Department, but kept an eye on all important subjects, and, being on terms of close intimacy with the Secretary of State, overshadowed his colleague. As Private Secretary, Castlereagh had Joseph Planta, a clerk in the office, who subsequently became Under Secretary. Planta was indeed a case of "permanence," for he had been previously Précis Writer to Canning, who had appointed him to a clerkship in the Foreign Office while still an Eton boy of fifteen, and he had been so much devoted to that Chief that he could hardly keep from tears when he went to see him on the morning of the famous duel with Castlereagh, and considered how narrowly he had escaped death.

Castlereagh does not seem to have devoted much attention to the organisation of his staff. He was exceedingly diligent himself, and was at his office daily from eleven to three or four, writing important despatches with his own hand \* ; but the greater the love of a Minister for doing the whole of his

\* *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, iii. 554.

work himself, the more unfortunate is it for the education of the office. Castlereagh, nevertheless, was one of the greatest of Foreign Secretaries, and his relations with foreign statesmen were a model for the personal diplomacy of the twentieth century.

Canning, when he came back to the Office in 1822, was more actively concerned with the management of the Office. Mr. Algernon Cecil\* cherishes the belief that Planta, who had become Under Secretary in 1817 at the age of thirty, was partly responsible for Canning's reforms. Possibly the Planta papers, which by his will he directed should be destroyed, would have thrown more light on the subject. As it is, I find little evidence for the supposition, although writing after his retirement to Stratford Canning about an incident of some importance at the Foreign Office, he says † that in such a case Mr. Canning would have consulted him. He was, however, a man of great amiability, universally popular and, according to Stratford Canning, ‡ an excellent man. He had, too, been exceedingly useful as Private Secretary to Castlereagh during the Congresses of Vienna and Aix-la-Chapelle.

Like Weston and Burges, Planta was a voluminous letter writer, and the correspondence which they carried on with British representatives abroad must have taken up a large share of the time of Under Secretaries. For the work of organisation Planta was perhaps too sensitive or too good-natured.

\* *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, iii. 554.

† *Life of Stratford Canning* (Lane Poole), i. 196.

‡ *Ibid.*

Indeed, he seems to have had a remarkably soft heart, and such events as Canning's duel and Lord Castlereagh's suicide tried him severely. Moreover, he found the business of the office very severe. In 1822 he says \* that, burdened as he is with the shafts of the wagon, it is almost too much for him. It would perhaps be unkind to assume merely from a phrase in the letter in which he describes the Canning-Castlereagh duel, that he had the proper office spirit. He says † that profound secrecy was preserved: "neither Hammond nor Bagot (the two Under Secretaries) was made acquainted with it." The Secretaries of State of those days would, I should judge, usually have been indisposed to confide their intention to fight a duel to the Under Secretaries, but Hammond and Bagot, being close personal friends of Canning, might have been the exception. Even a hundred years later Lord Salisbury would not have told Sir Thomas Sanderson that he was going to fight a duel, nor would Sir Thomas Sanderson have expected to be told. Some of Lord Salisbury's twentieth century successors would have been equally secretive, but some of the Under Secretaries, at least of the Permanent Under Secretaries, would have been much aggrieved at being kept in the dark.

A little further light on Planta's character comes from a letter of Canning's written in 1823. An enormous file of papers accumulated at this time in connection with the complaints of a member of the staff by name Scheener. The details of the case

\* *Stratford Canning Papers*, vii. App. p. 584.

† *Petrie's Life of George Canning*, p. 73.

are of no particular interest; but Scheener had friends in high places, and the Duke of Clarence intervened on his behalf. Here is an extract from Canning's reply, dated 14th August 1823, which is typical of the writer and incidentally touches in our portrait of Planta.

*Copy of Extract of Draft (14th August 1823` from Mr. Canning to the Duke of Clarence.\**

" . . . Mr. Canning has no hesitation in declaring, for himself, that he would rather write and copy every despatch in the Office with his own hand, than employ any longer in confidential services an Individual so wrong-headed, of a nature so suspicious, and of a temper so ungovernable, as Mr. Scheener's whole correspondence and conduct on this occasion has shewn him to be.

" It is impossible for Mr. Canning to expect that any Under Secretary should expose himself again to what Mr. Planta's excessive good nature and good humour have endured from Mr. Scheener. . . ."

Planta's grandfather originated from the Grisons, and after settling in London became assistant librarian at the British Museum. His son succeeded him in that situation and became chief librarian in 1799. After leaving the Foreign Office in 1827, when Canning became Prime Minister, Planta became one of the joint secretaries of the Treasury, and Member for Hastings. He died in 1847.

During the inquiry of the Select Committee on the Diplomatic Service in 1861, Mr. Hope observed

\* *Chief Clerk's Papers.*

that he believed the Foreign Office "hand" originated with Canning. Mr. Hammond did not deny this, but thought it rested more with Lord Palmerston. Mr. Canning, he said, had laid down the rule that not more than ten lines should be put into a sheet of foolscap. Seeing that the clerks were still copying clerks, handwriting in Canning's time and long afterwards was of great importance. The power of the Canning tradition is best illustrated by an answer of Edmund Hammond before the Select Committee of 1870. Asked whether he thought it would be wise to alter a rule laid down by Canning in regard to diplomatic salaries, he replied, "Mr. Canning was a great man, and a rule which he laid down was no doubt well considered, and, on the whole, I should not be disposed to alter it."

Canning's influence on the Office, though undoubted, is somewhat intangible. Certain specific reforms, which I shall quote, he did make, but beyond that, and more important than that, was the active interest which he took in the staff and their work—an interest which must have created a spirit of keenness and a sense of pride in their duties. I recall, as illustrating what I mean, a speech made by Sir Edward Grey at a dinner given by him to the Office in celebration of Lord Hardinge's appointment as Viceroy. He dwelt on the inspiration supplied by Hardinge, and expressed his conviction that under him every one had felt that good work was appreciated.

Seeing that Canning paid so much attention to detail, it is not surprising that he delegated little authority to others in questions of high policy.



The staff remained almost as unimportant as before, although somewhat increased in numbers. Increase was necessary because the work, as indicated by the number of despatches sent and received, was growing rapidly. The total for 1821 was 6,193; that for 1826 was 12,402. This, however, was an exceptional year and the number fell in 1827 to 10,261, and did not reach 12,000 again till 1831.

The Slave Trade Department was set up by Canning about 1825. Already, in 1821, 155 despatches had been received and 29 sent on that subject; in 1826, 474 were received and 321 sent. The Consular Department was also separated from the Political Departments by Canning in 1825,\* in which year it accounted for more than a quarter of the office correspondence. Of these two departments I hope to speak in a later chapter.

The abolition of the Levant Company in 1825 was also a cause of additional work for the Foreign Office, for our business relations with the Ottoman Empire had till then been managed by the Company, through their own representatives.

Both the increase of work and the corresponding increase of staff were doubtless in part due to Canning's zeal for efficiency. His personal interest in the staff must have increased that efficiency. When Under Secretary he told Malmesbury on one occasion † that he was writing "in the midst of a hubbub of clerks; all of whom I am taking home from their work to dine with me that they

\* Report from the Select Committee on Consular Establishment, 1835, Q.2.

† Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, iii. 593.

may work again the more readily and actively after dinner."

Canning, by the way, almost alone among Secretaries of State, lived in the Foreign Office, having moved in to Sir R. Preston's house in 1825.\* The nearest recent parallel to this was the residence of Sir James Fergusson in two rooms among the Resident Clerks' quarters, when he was Parliamentary Under Secretary about 1887.

The actual staff in 1821 † consisted of the two Under Secretaries, a Chief Clerk, three Senior Clerks and thirteen Junior Clerks, a Librarian, a Sub-Librarian, a Clerk in the Chief Clerk's department, a Private Secretary and a Précis Writer, a Translator, Turkish Interpreter, a Collector and Transmitter of Papers. The last three were scarcely part of the office staff proper; the Collector and Transmitter was indeed a clergyman, "the Reverend Mr. Goddard." There was also an "Entering Clerk," whose post was abolished in the following year. The salary of the Secretary of State was £6,000: and two Under Secretaries together in that year received £3,349, 17s. 9d.; but that must have been exceptional as their normal salaries had been fixed in 1799 at £2,000 with an additional £500 after three years, the term of three years being altered to seven by Order in Council of 24th July 1817. The Chief Clerk had £2,242, 7s. 1d. and the Senior Clerks and Junior Clerks between them respectively £3,567, 1s. and £5,558, 17s. 6d.

\* Report of Committee on new Foreign Office, F.O. Gen. 2, 1799-1867.

† Return to Order of Select Committee in February 1850.

The Librarian had £700. This remuneration was made up partly of perquisites, but these had now become small affairs. There was £50 from the Irish Concordatum Fund for each of the Under Secretaries : the Chief Clerk had 25 guineas from the East India Company and 30 guineas in fees on diplomatic and consular appointments ; then there were the Treaty presents which from 1793 to 1831 averaged £2,874, 4s. 5d. ; these were abolished in 1831, but some compensation was given to the existing staff. The value of the diamond snuff boxes given on these occasions to the Secretary of State and Under Secretaries could not be ascertained. The sale of *Gazettes*, or the equivalent, was another perquisite for the staff, which was soon to disappear

By 1832 the whole number of Senior and Junior Clerks had risen to twenty-three. Those were the days of Palmerston, and he requires a fresh chapter.

## Chapter III

### PALMERSTON

LORD PALMERSTON took office on the 22nd November 1830, and as in the course of his career he was three times Foreign Secretary for periods amounting in all to nearly sixteen years, it is only natural that he should have left his mark upon the department. History may not regard him as a great Foreign Minister, and he may not even have been a great administrator, but he was an exceedingly active one, who concerned himself with the smallest details. In spite of this, or because of this, he was not very popular. Lord Granville when, as Lord Leveson, he became Under Secretary at the Foreign Office in 1840, said\*: "The clerks detest Palmerston, and have an absurd idea that he takes pleasure in bullying them." Whether or not this idea was absurd, it is certainly the case that he had a way of writing minutes about the staff which must have greatly annoyed those of whom he wrote; he would, for instance, observe that this or that official, sometimes a hardworking man according to his own lights, could have practically nothing to do; Mr. Rolleston's duties were positively a sinecure; the Chief Clerk's duties were but slight, and so on. They did not take these remarks submissively.

\* *Life of Lord Granville*, by Lord Fitzmaurice, i. 29.

Mr. Rolleston justified his existence in a memorandum which must have brought tears to his own eyes: "Every treaty concluded by Great Britain with Foreign Powers and States during the momentous struggle for the liberties of Europe to the downfall of Bonaparte was during that most eventful period engrossed for the Royal Signature by Mr. Rolleston. The character of the French ruler made it an imperative duty (lest he should thwart the view of the Allies in the interval) that in completing the Treaties for Ratification and Exchange the utmost possible exertion should be used. From five or six in the morning (or even earlier) till a late hour at night, month after month, was devoted by Mr. Rolleston to this great and important object.

"It is hoped that the unwearied zeal and indefatigable labour conscientiously displayed by him at a crisis when both were of vital importance will not now be swept from remembrance because Europe happens at present to be in a state of peace."

If Mr. Rolleston did not quite, like George IV, believe that he had taken part in the battle of Waterloo, he must have felt that he had discharged a nobler duty, facing single-handed with his quill the conqueror of Europe; he saw Napoleon striving to thwart the manœuvres of the Allied Powers and himself thwarted by the untiring industry of Mr. Rolleston.

The attack on Mr. Rolleston, however, came a little later.

We have the state of the Office, as it was when Palmerston first appeared, described in a memoran-

dum prepared for his predecessor, Lord Aberdeen, in 1828.

The business of the Secretary of State's office is said to consist in receiving intelligence, conducting correspondence, preparing and issuing warrants, and managing transactions with foreign powers.

The duty of the Principal Secretary of State is "to lay all such business before the King, to receive His Majesty's commands thereupon, and to give the necessary orders accordingly in the respective departments."

The duty of the Under Secretaries of State is to attend to the execution of those orders, prepare drafts of such special letters and instruments as the Secretary of State may require, to transact themselves whatever is of the most confidential nature, and generally superintend the work of the office."

The Chief Clerk is to see that warrants and other instruments are duly prepared and transmitted to the proper person for signature and fees paid. He acts as the accountant of the office, in which capacity he receives and accounts for all the fees and gratuities, together with such other sums as are issued for defraying the general expense of the office. The first Senior Clerk is to assist the Under Secretaries, draft circulars, and see entries made in current books, to have custody of ciphers, and to prepare new ones.

The second Senior Clerk managed the Slave Trade Department, the third was examiner of the Extraordinaries (the accounts of foreign missions). Mr. Rolleston's department had charge of Treaties

and Royal Letters. Three clerks were to act as Private Secretaries to the Under Secretaries, opening despatches, inserting necessary details in Register, and have custody of despatches and transact political confidential business. The other clerks prepared papers for signing, made fair drafts and copies.

All this is not very different from the duties of the staff even sixty years later.

The paper goes on to say that the attendance of the Under Secretaries "is constant and unremitting"; that of the Chief Clerk constant, and the other clerks, though not always employed, are in daily attendance and expected to be ready for the execution of any business in which it is necessary to employ them.

As to the unremitting attendance of the Under Secretaries, I may recall the correspondence between Sir George Shee and Mr. Backhouse, already quoted, from which it was seen that they did at least come to the conclusion that night attendance for both of them was unnecessary. The attendance of the staff generally was from twelve on to seven or thereabouts; sometimes till much later. Great efforts had to be made to ensure their arriving at twelve. Even the great Canning \* had once to complain of coming about that hour and being unable to get the papers he wanted because the proper clerk was not in attendance; the clerks were therefore to come at twelve at latest. There was never any difficulty in getting them to stay late. The memorandum prepared for Lord Aberdeen having been brought

\* F.O. Conf. Gen., No. 4.

up to date for Lord Palmerston, he is told that the clerks stay till seven and eight, or even nine and ten ; they work at home in the morning, and their work "interferes essentially with domestick economy and comfort, and often seriously affects the health of members of the office. They are all distinguished by the strictest honour and integrity."

Much the same might have been said a few years ago. Until the reforms of 1906 the Foreign Office differed from other offices in the irregularity of its hours, its late start and late close ; but, while critics often supposed it to be unbusinesslike, it was really distinguished by an aptitude for doing anything that was required at short notice without regard to fixed rules and regulations. Greater strictness was not all gain.

Some irregularity of business habits was perhaps to be expected when clerks were appointed without any kind of examination or regular probation ; but a statement annexed to an Order in Council of 21st August 1841, tells us that no person has been made a Senior Clerk if not fit for such promotion, and that discipline is united with a laudable esprit de corps.

The staff by 1832 had been, as we have seen, considerably increased. There were now four Senior Clerks and twenty-three Juniors divided into three classes, and besides, the Librarian and Sub-Librarian.

There were extra clerks in the Chief Clerk's Department, the Consular Department, the Slave Trade Department (3), and the Treaty Department.



This is the actual charge for contingencies for the four quarters ending 31st December 1839:

	Quarter ending 31st March 1839.			Three Quarters ending 31st Dec. 1839.			Total of One Year's Expenditure.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
<b>SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES—</b>									
Clerk employed in Royal Letter Department ...	133	15	0	408	15	0	542	10	0
Clerk employed in Consular Department ...	25	0	0	41	17	0	66	17	0
Clerk employed in Librarian's Department	25	0	0	51	16	0	76	16	0
Extra Clerk ...	25	0	0	68	9	0	93	9	0
Assistant Office Keeper ...	25	0	0	75	0	0	100	0	0
Lamplighter and Coal Porter ...	23	13	0	70	19	0	94	12	0
Extra Door Keeper ...	12	10	0	37	10	0	50	0	0
Compensation to Under-Secy. and Clerks for loss of Treaty Presents	211	9	6	618	2	3	829	11	9
Compensation to Office Keepers for abolition of Christmas Gratuities ...	18	0	3	54	0	11	72	1	2
<b>RENT, RATES, AND TAXES—</b>									
Rent ...	347	16	8	1,043	10	0	1,391	6	8
Parochial and Church Rates ...	56	0	0	168	0	0	224	0	0
Land Tax ...	10	0	3	30	0	9	40	1	0
Water Rate ...	10	11	3	31	13	9	42	5	0
Gas Light Company ...	6	6	0	18	18	0	25	4	0
<b>TRADESMEN'S BILLS—</b>									
Newspapers, stamps, etc.	80	15	8	303	14	7	384	10	3
Subscription to Mirror of Parlt. ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	11	7	0
Printing ...	290	13	0	721	12	0	1,012	5	0
Maps ...	30	2	6	120	0	0	150	2	6
Books ...	37	4	0	172	10	4	209	14	4
Bookbinding, incl. Off. Correspond. ...	86	14	0	235	7	2	322	1	2
French Newspapers ...	15	17	6	47	11	0	63	8	6
Engraving Passports, etc.	6	8	0	12	3	0	18	11	0

## THE FOREIGN OFFICE

	Quarter ending 31st March 1839.			Three Quarters ending 31st Dec. 1839.			Total of One Year's Expenditure.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
<b>TRADESMEN'S BILLS (continued)—</b>									
Coals and Wood ... ..	97	7	0	264	7	0	361	14	0
Wax Chandlery ... ..	90	0	0	174	0	0	264	0	0
Tallow Chandlery and Turnery ... ..	52	0	6	146	18	6	198	19	0
Lamps, Oil, Cotton, etc.	120	9	6	278	9	6	398	19	0
Patent Locks and Despatch Boxes ... ..	29	9	0	104	9	0	133	18	0
Ironmongery and Hard- ware ... ..	12	14	0	63	0	0	75	14	0
Silver lace tassels, etc. ...	16	16	0	32	0	0	48	16	0
Plumber and Glazier ...	43	9	0	118	0	0	161	9	0
Medical attendance on servants ... ..	8	1	6	23	6	6	31	7	6
Repairing and regulating clocks ... ..	2	13	9	7	16	9	10	10	6
Chimney sweeper ... ..	13	8	0	32	12	0	46	0	0
<b>MISCELLANEOUS—</b>									
New Year's Gifts ... ..	—			—			8	2	0
Office Messengers Bills of Serv. ... ..	118	12	0	341	3	6	460	5	6
Office Doorkeepers' Bills	29	9	6	119	16	6	149	6	0
Wages and board of ser- vants ... ..	73	16	7	221	10	2	295	6	9
Extra assistance in copyg.	71	15	0	170	0	0	241	15	0
Order Book House of Commons ... ..	—			—			10	10	0
Mr. Francklin —Graty. on quitting Office ... ..							200	0	0
Mr. Taylor —Outfit on going to Hanover ... ..							100	0	0
Do. —Expenses of prosecution ... ..							18	19	7
Mrs. Wilson —Gratuity by order of Lord Palmerston							50	0	0
Murza Ibrahim—Expenses in attending Houssein Khan							75	0	0

Palmerston kept a very tight hand on expenditure. The estimates for "contingencies" in 1840-41 were reduced from £9,000 to £8,800 "according to Your Lordship's order." He must be told why

certain salaries were charged to that account, the reason being that they were of a temporary character, the establishment of regular clerks being sanctioned by Order in Council. At another time the Secretary of State finds fault with the item of £940 for wax, oil, and coal, and in a later year this is reduced to £800, after enquiries had been made into the expenditure at other offices, which, in view of the hours kept at the Foreign Office, was naturally much lower.

Some of the items have a certain interest : £1,012 for printing is a modest item compared with £264 for wax chandlery ; subscription to the *Mirror of Parliament* £11, 7s., silver lace tassels (probably for attaching to the Great Seal) £48, 16s. This particular account has not the item for embroidered covers for treaties which sometimes appears, nor does it contain a subscription of 10 guineas to the parish fund for removing nuisances and relieving the poor, a juxtaposition which is illuminating. No charge appears for stationery, or "stationary" as it was then usually spelled : this must have been an expensive item, seeing that up to this time the paper used was of the thickest possible texture and edged with gold. It was presumably supplied by some other department, possibly by the Lord Chamberlain. In modern times gold-edged paper, though not of such superb quality, was used by the Austro-Hungarian and perhaps by the Turkish Embassies.

Expenses were paid primarily out of the Fee Fund and the profits from the *Gazette* ; in 1845 for instance the *Gazette* Fund promised to be very

productive. The balance, generally about £18,000, was made good up to 1830 out of the Civil List

The expenses of the regular establishment were fixed by Order in Council, but Treasury consent was required for expenditure on the Contingencies Account; after 1831 the balance was made good by the Treasury, until 1849, when the whole expense was borne on a Parliamentary Vote as it is now. Some trouble was at times experienced in dealing with the accounts owing to the refractoriness of the Chief Clerk, Mr. Bidwell, who contrived to cling to his post until he was sixty-six, a year or more, as Lord Palmerston pointed out, after the date when he should have retired. This was in 1841, and there had been a Thomas Bidwell in the office since 1767, he being the second, so that he possibly thought that the office could not do without one: still he had had an innings of fifty years and there was a John Bidwell also who had been there since 1798, with a John Bidwell, junior, ready to come in the following year for a term of thirty years. On the other hand, language had sometimes been used to Thomas Bidwell which might well have led him to retire some years earlier.

I remember being taught by Lord Curzon the absurdity of the expression, happily not used by myself, "I need not say." "Then why say it?" asked Lord Curzon. Regardless of this principle, Backhouse writes to Bidwell, or for Bidwell's edification, in 1837: "It is not worth while making a remark on the fact of the Chief Clerk now sending me this tardy notice after it has been notorious in the office that I am no longer in attendance for

business and after my summer leave of absence (though indisposition still keeps me in London) has actually commenced." The trouble was over some inaccurate estimates, and Palmerston also finds fault with Fox Strangways, the Political Under Secretary, "for not looking sharper after the matter." A year or two earlier it had been discovered that, owing to a succession of insufficient estimates, the bills of many of the tradesmen who furnished supplies had remained unpaid for a period of two years and more after they were due.

Many of Palmerston's minutes have been quoted by Sir Edward Hertslet, who observes that they were written in a satirical rather than a severe tone. Judging by the effect of satire as compared with severity on schoolboys, and remembering that the work of Foreign Office clerks was much like that of schoolboys in those days, we may probably take it that Palmerston's popularity was not increased by his minutes. The most famous minute of all was a kinder one which Sir Thomas Sanderson kept by him, suitably framed. It ran thus: "The greater Portion of the Foreign Office Hands are excellent and admired by all but there are some few on the Establishment who might improve their Hand-writing if they would take more Pains to form their Letters distinctly. P.20/11-48." Hertslet gives half a dozen minutes on the subject of handwriting, one, on a despatch from a Consul who said that his house "what with fleas and other vermin was absolutely insufferable," runs thus: "living with his fleas can hardly be worse than reading his handwriting, which I cannot do!" Other minutes

referred to the punctuation of despatches, the construction of the sentences, or the writer's literary style.

All this was tiresome, but undoubtedly Palmerston did make the office more efficient, and the establishment was by the end of his last term of office comparatively well staffed and paid. One plea from Mr. Backhouse, against a reduction in the salary of the Under Secretary, must, I think, have failed in spite of his eloquence. It is, perhaps, worth quoting, because the sentiments which it expresses reappeared with the demand for reforms that arose during the War. An Under Secretary, he says, in contact with Ambassadors must incur expenses which he cannot avoid without disparagement to the office. Curtailment of salaries would be cruel. "Men should not be weighed down by sickening cares attendant upon a struggle to maintain with insufficient means appearances proper to their station."

When Palmerston's scheme of reforms went through in 1841, Backhouse had been Under Secretary for twenty-four years, but he was not an old man and was only sixty-two when he died, four years later. Mr. Algernon Cecil, in the *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, calls him the diligent Backhouse, but I fancy that Palmerston himself must be considered the father of the reforms. They were introduced just before the end of his second term of office.

The permanent establishment, as settled by the Order in Council of 21st August 1841, consisted of a Secretary of State with a salary of £5,000 a year ;

two Under Secretaries of State, of whom the one called "Permanent" had a salary of £2,000 a year; the other called "Parliamentary," a salary of £1,500 a year; a Chief Clerk with a salary increasing at £50 a year from £1,000 to £1,250 a year:

Six Senior Clerks, with salaries increasing at £25 a year, from £600 to £1,000:

Ten clerks, with salaries increasing at £15 a year, from £350 to £545:

Seven junior clerks, with salaries increasing at £10 a year, from £100 to £150:

A Librarian and Keeper of the Papers, with a salary increasing at £20 a year, from £600 to £800; a Sub-Librarian, with a salary increasing at £15 a year, from £350 to £545:

Two clerks attached to the Chief Clerk's Department, with salaries increasing at £10 a year to £350, with a discretion on the part of the Secretary of State to raise the salary of each to the maximum salary of the second class, namely, £545 a year:

Four clerks, attached to the Slave Trade Department, increasing at £10 a year, from £80 to £300:

Two clerks, attached to the Librarian's Department, with salaries increasing at £10 a year, from £80 to £300 a year:

A Translator, £300:

A Private Secretary, £300:

A Précis Writer, £200:

A Printer, £150.

In addition to the established salaries, various special allowances were to be paid for the performance of special duties, or as compensation for past services of a special nature; but, in conformity

with Lord Palmerston's promise to the Treasury, these allowances were to be abolished as opportunities might occur.

The working of the Office under this scheme was, at the instance of the Treasury, reviewed in 1850 by a small Committee including Sir Charles Trevelyan and Mr. Gibson Craig. Such an idea was abhorrent to some of the older members of the Office.

Mr. Lenox-Conyngham writes, in November 1848, an impassioned appeal to the Secretary of State.

"It is no part of my duty to make any remonstrance against the entertainment of this proposal of the Lords of the Treasury, that the work of transacting our business, and the internal arrangement of this office should be subjected to the scrutiny of persons not connected with the Office; thus transferring the responsibility of the Secretary of State to persons far less competent than himself in every respect to undertake a revision, if revision be necessary, of his own office, or as the Treasury letter says, 'The department under his Lordship's *superintendence*.' I appeal to Lord Palmerston to say whether the business of this office is conducted to his satisfaction or not, and whether he has any reason to think that the Chiefs of Divisions are not zealous, able, and efficient men of business, and quite as much devoted to the discharge of their public duties as Sir Charles Trevelyan, or any other man in the employment of a Government office.

"I avail myself of this opportunity to say that Sir Charles Trevelyan had no ground whatever for assuming, as he did the other day, that the Printing Press of this office was closed; and I am quite



confident that if he had then been made to feel the wide difference that there is between unfounded assumptions and proved facts, it would have done him personally a great deal of good, and the State no disservice."

This document is dated 21st November, and marked "Returned November 23/48," but there is nothing to show that Lord Palmerston ever read it.

One gathers from it that Mr. Conyngham wrote a very good hand, and was as capable of tall writing as so many of his colleagues; but not, it would seem, very wise.

On the other hand, in justice to him, I ought to quote Mr. Alston's evidence before the Select Committee of 1870 (2012). He told the Committee that Mr. Conyngham had been Chief Clerk from 1841 till his death in 1866; that he had a very great knowledge of the details of the Foreign Office, and was, in other respects, a very able man and a most excellent public servant; he was always at the office, early and late, summer and winter, year after year: he hardly ever took a holiday, and the duties which he discharged were of the greatest importance; a very great disciplinarian, and very particular with the accounts. Perfect, in fact.

One interesting point in Mr. Conyngham's memorandum is his horror at the idea that the office was not the private property of the Secretary of State.

Addington, the Under Secretary, whatever his feelings may have been, merely hopes on 3rd December 1849 that it is not "unnatural or indecorous" to postpone the inquiry till the new year.

The report of the Committee in question begins by stating that clerks are appointed at an early age, usually about seventeen, without being subjected to any examination, or to any prescribed period of probation, and that they enter with the prospect of regular promotion.

As a matter of fact, I gather that most of the clerks of this period were nearer twenty than seventeen when appointed.

The establishment was divided, for the transaction of business, into six departments: four for diplomatic business, and the other two for the Consular and Slave Trade work. Each department was superintended by a Senior Clerk, and the bulk of their business was more or less equally divided between the two Under Secretaries.

The report seems to have contemplated the allocation of a certain mild responsibility for certain countries to each Senior Clerk, although previously, indeed, some kind of supervision had been exercised by the so-called private secretaries attached to the Under Secretaries.

The Chief Clerk had a separate department of his own, consisting of the financial business of the office and the superintendence of the domestic establishment, and had, in subordination to the Permanent Under Secretary, a general superintendence over the discipline of the office.

This left him outside all political work, and Mr. Conyngham, when, as Chief Clerk, he found himself the object of one of Palmerston's periodical attacks on his position, had taken a somewhat high line on this point, declaring that it would never do for

the Chief Clerk to be mixed up with the "heterogeneous" work of the political departments. The Chief Clerk vindicated his position, and the general scheme of his department still remains the same.

The hours of business were then, as they were till 1890, 12 or 12.30 to 7 or 7.30, but frequently in times of pressure, to 8 or 9 p.m., and even later; but almost all the more important work was done at home, by the Secretary of State, the Under Secretaries, and the heads of departments, all of whom were not infrequently employed during the whole day in scarcely interrupted labour.

Letters arriving before twelve o'clock were opened by the Resident Clerks (apparently a new invention), and sent straight to the Under Secretary, by whom they were forwarded with or without observation to the Secretary of State. They were returned by him to the Under Secretaries with such directions as he might think fit to give. They were then sent to the department to which they respectively belonged, where they were entered in a register kept of the papers passing daily through each department.

One wonders whether under this arrangement some papers may not have gone astray without even being registered; especially as the whole morning mail would be thus treated.

The drafts of answers, or memoranda of information called for by the Secretary of State, were prepared by the heads of departments.

Letters arriving during office hours were opened in the department and registered before being sent to the Under Secretary.

In times of pressure the department affected was assisted by the others : " The utmost readiness exists in all quarters to give mutual aid on these occasions, and it is held as an habitual principle in this office that in time of need the whole strength of the office is to be placed at the service of any department which is overburdened with work."

The discipline of the Office was well regulated and well maintained, and was united with a laudable feeling of public spirit [*esprit de corps* in the margin]. " The clerks of the Foreign Office justly consider their own credit involved in that of the department to which they belong, and they grudge no degree of exertion or length of attendance which is necessary for the successful transaction of the business."

This satisfactory state of the Office was, in great measure, " owing to a due proportion having long existed between the work to be done and the number of those who are to do it." [The marginal notes written on the printed drafts, rather after the fashion of a Greek chorus, say, oddly enough, " Satisfactory state of the office is mainly owing to the pressure of the work upon the establishment "]; " but it must also be attributed in no small degree to the intelligence and right feeling of the heads of departments."

The business had been greatly increasing for many years past, while only moderate additions had been made to the number of clerks employed. The grand total of dispatches received and sent had risen from 11,546, in Palmerston's first year of

office, to 30,725 in 1849, while the increase of staff was only from about 35 to 40.

When the report came to deal with possible changes, it pointed out, in the first place, that the business was of so confidential a nature, that "copyists of a low caste" and on a low scale of allowance could not, with any safety or propriety, be employed in it. The mistake lay, not in thinking that copyists of a low caste could not be employed, but in failing to realise that there were plenty of young men of a high enough caste—to keep this disagreeable word—to do the work faithfully at an even lower rate of pay than was assigned to the diplomatic establishment. However, the writer of the report observed that the variety of the papers to be copied so well excited and maintained the attention and interest of the clerks that such description of work could not properly be classed with ordinary copying. It tended, in truth, rather to expand than to contract the intellect.

The Committee recommended that no clerk should enter under the age of nineteen; that they should pass a preliminary examination such as to furnish presumptive evidence of their education and ability; and should be subject to a year's probation. Promotion in every grade should be by selection.

Referring to the system of finding funds for the Office, the report comments on the fact that the Fee Fund, of which the Chief Clerk had been receiver and paymaster, and which had been deposited, "according to immemorial usage" in a separate account of a private banker's, had since

1849 been paid into the Exchequer. The management of the *Gazette* had also been transferred to the Comptroller of the Stationery Office. Rents and rates and taxes, hitherto included in the contingencies, should, the report recommended, now be transferred to the estimate for rents and other expenses of Houses taken for the accommodation of Public Departments. Many other small changes were intended to assimilate the Foreign Office to other departments of State, the Committee even objecting to Foreign Office servants having free medical attendance.

One remarkable recommendation, which during the present century has had considerable effect, is that the charge for "loss by exchange on Diplomatic Allowances" should be gradually discontinued, by requiring all officers who may be hereafter appointed to diplomatic situations, to bear the loss arising from an unfavourable state of the exchange, as they will enjoy the benefit when it is favourable." This kind of rough and ready justice was, of course, grossly unfair to individuals, there being no presumption that each would in time be able to set off his gains against his losses. It was not till the time of the Great War, and then with some difficulty, that the principle was abandoned.

The Treaty Department, which dealt not only with treaties, but with ceremonial matters of all kinds, was no longer to be confided to the Chief Clerk, as for some years had been the case, and was to form a separate department.

The Chief Clerk was in future to have two clerks, well educated men, chosen with special reference

to their qualifications as accountants, while a Senior Clerk and a second clerk with a lower scale of pay than those in the political departments, were to be assigned to the Treaty Department.

Thus the foundation of the modern Office was laid, but it is clear that there was still no idea of giving responsibility to any one but the Secretary of State. Under Secretaries might be allowed to give advice now and then, but the whole business was in the hands of the Minister, and there is no difference except in degree between the Secretary of State's office of the time of Anne and that of Victoria.

Palmerston was to remain in office till the end of 1851, and Addington, who had succeeded Backhouse in 1842, remained at his post till 1854. Addington, a nephew of the Prime Minister and grandson of the original "Doctor," had been in the Diplomatic Service since the age of seventeen, and had served with Stratford Canning, who wrote of their first association \*: "His cheerful spirits and ever-ready intelligence made him both a useful and an agreeable companion." He seems not only to have been agreeable, as Weston and Planta had been before him, but forceful. Lord Aberdeen frequently † rejected Addington's draft-despatches as being too vigorous.

Possible Addington was too vigorous also for his staff. The Senior Clerks discussed among themselves the propriety of a protest against some action of his, the nature of which is not clear, and Mr. Mellish, the famous Mellish, as Mr. Cecil calls

\* *Stratford Canning*, i. 233.

† *Ibid.*, ii. 125.

him, who, together with Palmerston and the Prince Consort, was alone credited with understanding the Schleswig Holstein question, said that Addington's whole proceeding was "so underhand and so unlike a gentleman that I must confess I feel that we are called upon to express our sentiments with respect to it."

Against this there is the testimony in his favour of the Great Elchi, which was well worth having, and of Lord Malmesbury,\* who said that he had every assistance from Mr. Addington, but that the Chief of the Clerks, Mr. Hammond, was a very strong partisan of the other side (*i.e.* Palmerston's).

Hammond, too, before the Committee of 1870,† uttered a strong panegyric on Addington, who had then just died; his career had been marked with great devotedness to the public service; he had served abroad with ability, and to his credit, and to the advantage of the country. "He was a most meritorious public servant, and one whose loss all those who are interested in public matters may regret, and all those who were private friends of his may deplore."

If Addington was forceful, Aberdeen was not, while Palmerston was too much so. This is not the place to discuss Palmerston's well-known characteristics as a Foreign Minister. Sir Charles Petrie, in his life of Canning,‡ ranks English Foreign Ministers in order of merit as follows: first, Canning; second, Lord Grey of Fallodon; third, Chatham; with Palmerston a bad fourth. Personally, I should place Castlereagh also above Palmerston, though I

\* *Dictionary of National Biography*. † No. 1771. ‡ P. 255.



cannot, with propriety, say where ; but Palmerston and Canning are most concerned with the traditions of the Office. I should not have supposed them to be much alike, but Henry Adams \* spoke of Canning's arrogance marking him as, perhaps, the most offensive Englishmen with whom America had ever dealt, which is the sort of thing other people might have said of Palmerston.

Another question which is hardly germane to my subject, and which has, in any case, frequently been treated, is that of Palmerston's relations with Queen Victoria. It was a very far cry from the subservience of Ministers in the eighteenth century to Palmerston's disregard even of propriety in his treatment of his Sovereign, but the victory was with the Queen ; and as long as she lived, the proper forms to which she had been accustomed were always maintained by later Ministers.

\* *American Foreign Relations*, p. 134.

## Chapter IV

### COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION

IN 1856, under the auspices of Lord Clarendon, entrance to the Foreign Office was made subject to examination, as had been recommended in 1850.

The scheme of competitive examinations for the Civil Service was founded by Mr. Gladstone on a report prepared by Sir Stafford Northcote and Sir Charles Trevelyan, and it was evidently considered even by himself to be an alarming innovation. In a letter \* to Sir James Graham on 3rd January 1854, he says: "What I seek is your countenance and favour in an endeavour to introduce to the Cabinet a proposal that we should give our sanction to the principle that, in every case when a satisfactory test of a defined and palpable nature can be furnished, the public service shall be laid open to personal merit in lieu of the present system of appointments more or less controlled by favour. . . . I am very deeply in earnest about this matter, but not, I hope, beyond the reach of sage advice.

"For the present I do not intend to mention it in the Cabinet. I have spoken to Lord Aberdeen. . . ."

Even Mr. Gladstone did not like to propose such a change to the Cabinet without due precaution.

\* *Life of Sir James Graham* (Parker), ii. 210.

Sir James Graham was equally cautious. "The great extent of the proposed change, and its probable consequences, both official and political, demand the most careful deliberation. I am unwilling to pledge myself to an irrevocable opinion," and so forth. Sir James's difficulty was that he did not see how a scheme of examination could be devised which would apply to every department and yet be adaptable to the particular wants and character of each. In the end the Foreign Office was the only department which was held, and is still held, to need a special form of test. Very properly the special test is designed to prove the candidates' ability to acquire two or more foreign languages. Sir James Graham was perhaps tainted with that obstinate heresy that young men should begin while still at school to confine their studies to those subjects which will be "of use to them" in their profession. Possibly he thought that men designed for the Treasury should be rigorously trained in political economy, and those for the Board of Trade in commercial geography. Whatever he thought, he found the difficulties great "but not insurmountable." The power of the Board of Examiners would be "almost inordinate." Moral worth and personal merits apart from intellectual attainments were, he held, essential elements of fitness. I fear the testimony to moral worth which was, for instance, required in my own case, was somewhat perfunctory, but I did have—as, I believe, candidates still have—to produce a sponsor for my respectability. Sir James's letter is a long one, and to us to whom competitive examinations are a commonplace, and

in the opinion of some an overrated blessing, his tone is elevated to a degree which is almost incomprehensible. For instance: "On one point I feel certain. This proposal, if made by the Ministers of the Crown, will eclipse all other reforms, and will be regarded as the greatest boon conferred on the nation since bread was freed from taxation." I cannot help associating this train of thought with that of a recent writer to *The Times*, who said that, in our country's great economic need, there were those who were willing even to spend their winters in England if they could have running water in their hotel bedrooms. Whether running water should, as a boon and a blessing to men, come between free bread and competitive examinations or after both I do not feel qualified to guess.

Shortly after receiving Sir James Graham's letter, Mr. Gladstone wrote on the same subject to Lord John Russell, Lord Clarendon's predecessor at the Foreign Office, who, perhaps thinking particularly of that department, answered: "I hope no change will be made, and I must certainly protest against it." The reform did, in fact, make little substantial change in the character of the Foreign Office staff. This is not to be wondered at when we see the nature of the examination. The subjects were: handwriting, orthography, précis writing, and translation from French, and of these, handwriting was the greatest. Candidates were required to write a good bold hand, forming each letter distinctly; to write quickly English and French from dictation; or show that they understood French well and that they could make an accurate and good translation

of any French paper; to show that they could make a correct, clear précis of any papers placed in their hands. They were to be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, except those who might not reside with relations or have an established and respectable home in the Metropolis or its neighbourhood, in which case the minimum age was twenty complete.

Lord Wodehouse, before the Committee of 1861,\* described this as more particularly the examination of a clerk, when compared with the much more severe examination of an attaché, meaning, apparently, that a clerk was really little more than a copyist. Lord Clarendon, before the same Committee, expressed himself as having every reason to be satisfied with the result of the examinations. Mr. Charles Spring Rice, on the other hand, as might be expected of a member of so highly intelligent a family, declared that the examination was a very slight mediocre test,† which placed the Foreign Office, educationally speaking, at a very low level, for, at present, said he, “the test is not much more than an ordinary boy of fourteen, with a proper education, ought to be able to answer.” Even the examination for the Diplomatic Service, he thought, was “useful as far as it goes, if only as keeping out persons notoriously incompetent.” Mr. Conyngham,‡ then still Chief Clerk, took the same line. Asked whether the clerks who were then employed in the Foreign Office were superior in ability to those who were formerly employed, and before the introduction of the Civil Service examination, he

\* Qn. 708.

† 3119.

‡ 3043, 3044.

could not say that he thought they were : " I think that the system of education in this country is so conducted that young men are very rarely properly educated for useful purposes, and if they pass a good examination before the Civil Service Commissioners, it is, I believe, owing to their being gifted with good natural abilities and being judiciously crammed. " He did, however, admit that the Foreign Office had gained a negative advantage, for he thought, with Mr. Spring Rice, that the system tended to keep out grossly ignorant and stupid persons.

Whether we are intended to assume that previously there were some such persons in the office, I cannot say.

Mr. Hammond,\* wiser than Conyngham as regards the meaning of education, said that his theory with regard to the diplomatic profession, as with regard to every other profession, was that the real education of a man began after he was twenty-one ; he must then educate himself for the special duties of an attaché, or for any other special employment.

Both Spring Rice and Conyngham seem to assume that the Secretary of State, without the restraint of an examination, might normally be expected to appoint any one, however ignorant and incompetent, in whom he was interested. I do not see any evidence that they were right. My impression is that successive Secretaries of State, on the whole, conscientiously did their best by the Office. Even unconscientious men generally try to foist bad bargains on to other offices rather than their

\* 261.

own, and it is the least powerful office which suffers.

However this may be, between the meagreness of the test and the continuance of the nomination system, it was natural that things should remain much as they were.

Looking at the Foreign Office list for 1890, a whole generation later, I see that at the head of the office were Currie, Lister, Alston, Kennedy, and Anderson, who had entered without an examination, all men of ability who could stand comparison with those (except perhaps Sanderson) who came below them and had passed an examination.

Currie became Permanent Under Secretary, and then Ambassador first at Constantinople and afterwards at Rome.

Charles Malcolm Kennedy had had as brilliant a University record as any product of later days. He took a first class in both parts of the Moral Science Tripos at Cambridge and won the Hulsean and Whewell prizes, though, oddly enough, he appears to have done all this after his appointment to the Foreign Office. Kennedy passed the greater part of his official life in the Commercial Department, of which he was for many years the head, and was known to his contemporaries as "darling" Kennedy. Sir Percy Anderson was an M.A. of Christ Church, and Villiers Lister an M.A. of Trinity College, Cambridge. Both were able men.

No serious weeding seems at any time to have been thought necessary. What was wrong was not the material but the subsequent waste of brain

power by which some at least must have been affected.

There is another point in the Northcote-Trevelyan Memorandum on which Graham, in a long postscript to his letter to Gladstone, comments with approval. They recommend the practice of requiring reports from superior officers on the character and ability of their juniors at every stage to qualify those juniors for promotion. Graham speaks of "a constant record of abilities, conduct, and assiduity." In the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service this rule, although often inculcated, is apt to sink into oblivion and then to be revived by some enthusiast. In theory it is excellent and there are many who uphold it, but in practice I personally believe it to be almost useless. It is difficult to persuade men to write unkind things about those with whom they live on terms of friendship; more particularly when the duties of their juniors do not call for any special display of talent. When the work assigned to a man does call for talent, his performance speaks for itself, and when some grave fault is committed chiefs can usually be trusted to report it. Otherwise degrees of assiduity and of moral worth, as Sir James Graham would say, are not easy enough to gauge for the unwilling chief to undertake the task. Consequently the ordinary rule in the Foreign Office, as, I imagine, elsewhere, has been for promotion to go by seniority and as a matter of course in the lower ranks, and for selection to begin when the positions in question involve a certain independence.

One result of the examination system, as appears



from the evidence given before the Committee of 1861, was an improved knowledge of French in the Diplomatic Service and no doubt in the Foreign Office ; but not much was required. There was a generally expressed opinion, in which Mr. Hammond, Lord Wodehouse, afterwards Earl of Kimberley and Secretary of State, himself a very good linguist, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Lord John Russell, and others all concurred, that what was most essential for candidates was a thoroughly English education, at public school and University, which should not be sacrificed in order to acquire a mastery of French. They held that all that was required for candidates was a good grounding in French, which could be perfected by practice after they had joined the service.

Mr. Hammond, to prove how easy it was to acquire a good grounding in French in this country,\* expressed his belief that it was the practice in most families to have a French person in the family.

It was generally agreed that Ambassadors and Ministers must have a good command of French, but Mr. Hammond explained that under an instruction by Lord Grenville, issued when his father was Under Secretary, official notes from British representatives to foreign Governments must be written in English. Hammond not only maintained that an Englishman could express himself much more powerfully in his own language, but thought that English State Papers were much more forcibly expressed than French. He did not foresee Disraeli's criticisms on his own style.

\* No. 330.

A very interesting point emerges from a conversation\* between the Chairman of the Select Committee, Mr. Monckton Milnes, Mr. Grant Duff, and Lord Wodehouse. All three assume, as a well-known fact, that the younger members of the Diplomatic Service take a "very partial interest" in foreign society and wonder why they do not enter so much into society as is desirable. The question for them was whether this was due to an imperfect knowledge of French or the natural shyness of Englishmen. This provides a curious, but true, commentary on the prevalent idea that young diplomats live a butterfly existence flitting from ballroom to ballroom. Probably at all times Heads of Missions have had more trouble to make the younger members of their staffs go into society than to keep them at work.

It will be convenient from this point to pursue the history of the Foreign Office examination in its later developments.

In 1858 a small change was made. The new rule was that, when two or more candidates had severally displayed sufficient ability in respect of the subjects, ". . . preference will be given to that one of them who may be able to make the best translation from German into English and to read the German written characters, notwithstanding that they may not have all obtained exactly the same number of marks and may not therefore in strictness be equally competent."

In 1864, from being used as an extra test between successful candidates, German was promoted to be a regular part of the examination.

\* Nos. 766, 774.

It was the custom\* to send up three candidates for each vacancy.

In 1871, the examination for the Foreign Office, at the request of the Civil Service Commissioners,† became a reality. Latin and German were made compulsory; there was a General Intelligence paper, and Greek, History, Italian, and Spanish were made optional subjects. The result was that the examination for the Foreign Office became more severe than for the Diplomatic Service. There were fewer vacancies, and owing to the absence of a property qualification the field was larger.

The subjects remained substantially the same for many years, but in 1891 what I, personally, regard as a retrograde step was taken, for Greek as an optional subject was abolished. I was myself preparing for the examination at the time and, having taken a classical degree at Cambridge, was naturally disgusted at losing this advantage and having to start upon a third modern language. My real objection, however, is quite impersonal. Those who were responsible for the change were obviously imbued with the heretical idea that the examination should be confined to "useful subjects," and had no proper conception of the best means of attracting brains. Any one who has found himself capable of acquiring a thorough knowledge of two languages, can, while young, add any number of other languages. A man who knows French, German, and Spanish is not a better man than one who knows French and German. I say this although

\* Committee of 1861, No. 220.

† Royal Commission of 1890, No. 26565.

a knowledge of Spanish was, as it happened, exceedingly useful to me in my career; for I, or any one else, could have learned Spanish after entering the Foreign Office. The classics, I am convinced, provide a much higher test of ability, so far as examinations can be the standard of ability. This was, as a matter of fact, soon discovered by Lord Lansdowne, who maintained that the result of an examination depending almost entirely on knowledge of foreign languages was to bring in men without proper education. They did not go to the Universities, and in some cases left school early, in order to acquire abroad a knowledge of languages, which was largely a question of ear. Lord Lansdowne, therefore, raised the minimum age to twenty-two, with the idea of attracting University candidates; I venture to think, quite rightly. I feel sure that, even apart from the utility or otherwise of University education, nineteen is too young to begin a career which is to be made altogether or mainly in foreign countries. Those who go abroad before twenty are much less likely to take with them the colour of their own country, and more likely to take on that of a foreign country, than older men; whereas it is very important that public servants should have the point of view of their own countrymen, as well as that of the people among whom they live. If they do not start their life abroad too soon they have a chance of achieving the proper balance.

I must in fairness give one remarkable argument which I have heard on the other side of the language question. At one time, for reasons into which I

need not enter here, candidates for the Levant Consular Service took Latin, Greek, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. At a meeting at Cambridge, where the successful candidates had two years' training before going abroad, I argued that to demand such a multiplicity of languages was absurd, particularly as, while at the University, those unfortunate young men had to acquire seven other languages worse than the first, or, more accurately, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Russian. I received the answer that the power of learning three Romance languages simultaneously at least argued that the successful candidates were superlative linguists. This is perfectly true, but we come back to the other thing that something more is required than superlative linguistic ability.

What is absolutely necessary is the power of acquiring modern languages. Any one who has had a classical education can acquire, and acquire with some ease, a good knowledge of modern languages so far as written work is concerned; but there are doubtless some men who have so little ear that they cannot acquire even a moderately good accent, particularly for speaking Romance languages, although I do not think that among highly educated men they are very common. The late Sir Charles Eliot was a very great scholar, with a wide knowledge of Eastern as well as European languages, but with no special facility for speaking them.

The test which we had in the examination of 1893 was certainly a very high one for French and German; among the papers was a dictation, which was given out in French or German as the case

might be, and taken down in English, and *vice versa*. But history, which included Indian history, I think I am justified in calling a cram subject. Another quaint feature of that examination was shorthand, which had been introduced, I believe, at the suggestion of Lord Rosebery, who also gave some prizes for shorthand to clerks already in the office. One or two of those who obtained the prizes were for a very short time occasionally sent for by the Secretary of State to take down despatches; but this did not last long, as it was no doubt realised that the move was really a retrograde one.

After Lord Lansdowne's time there were various changes in the examination, until it was closely assimilated to the ordinary Civil Service Examination; the difference being that two modern languages were compulsory, and a higher percentage of marks was allotted to them. During the war, examinations were suspended, and for several years after the war it was obvious that, as candidates had not been in a position to prepare themselves for the ordinary examination, some special arrangement must be made. They had, therefore, to pass a sort of qualifying examination, including French and general intelligence; and candidates who passed this came before a Board, who, after taking into consideration the proficiency shown, as well as the reports of their schoolmasters and of their various commanding officers, and the impression which they made at a personal interview, selected the required number. The successful candidates were then passed in the order of their age, as otherwise there might have been a serious block in promotion later,

which would have been the more unfair, because candidates could not all get back from military service at the same time.

I ought to explain that up to the war the old system of nomination had been maintained in part. The Secretary of State, however, had for some time taken, as a rule, little personal interest in the nominations, which mainly depended on his Private Secretary, and the fact that it was the Private Secretary and not the Permanent Under Secretary who managed matters preserved the theory that nominations were part of the prerogative of the Secretary of State. Mr. Hammond, before the Committees of 1858 and 1870, had been extremely careful to disclaim, almost with horror, any sort of responsibility for such matters.

In 1907 Boards of Selection, composed of the Private Secretary and a few other members of this office, were introduced, and they advised the Secretary of State as to the giving or withholding of nominations. Permission was required to appear before these Boards, but was freely given, although the Royal Commission of 1914 persisted for some reason in thinking that this was not so.

The combination of interview by a Selection Board with competitive examination is the best scheme that has yet been devised; benevolent autocracy being ruled out. The greatest difficulty in such cases as ours is not to find the best men, but to keep out the undesirables. It is obvious that the candidate who has obtained the highest number of marks may not even have the best brains, and, even if he has, he may not be endowed with tact and

adaptability ; he may be neither the most likely to make himself equally popular with Chinese or Mexicans or Frenchmen, nor the most likely to be the leading spirit in an international conference. It is equally obvious that a talk of five or ten minutes with a boy of twenty, particularly if he be rather shy, may not lead the Board to a correct judgment. Nevertheless, between the two parts of the ordeal, those who have insufficient powers of learning or insufficient character are generally weeded out.

Occasionally a candidate is so clearly unsuitable that a Board mentally rejects him at sight. An indignant parent once complained that his son had appeared before a Board to apply for a nomination for the Consular Service ; the boy was asked where he was at school, and whether he played football there ; he did : he was at once dismissed, and his rejection followed by the next post. What happened, no doubt, was that every member of the Board said to himself as the unfortunate boy came into the room : " This will never do " ; and then two of the more conscientious members asked the first question that came into their heads, while the rest thought : " Let us go on to the next man." At the Board which interviewed the first War candidates, we plied them diligently with questions on economic and commercial subjects, such as the openings for trade that they might have observed in Macedonia or Mesopotamia, and many of the victims showed plenty of intelligence in their answers. Such interrogatories must, however, be varied if they are not to drift into cram subjects.



I once knew an officer holding an interpreter's allowance, who, when I found that he could scarcely speak two words of the language which I expected of him, confessed that he had got a friend to translate some war reminiscences into that language, and, when the examiner observed that it was raining, at once said that that reminded him of an incident in the war, and reeled off his piece. On the whole, however, the judgment which a Board forms of candidates, apart from the knowledge shown, is generally very fair.

The procedure for selection and examination has been twice changed since the War. The present examination is still largely the same as that for the general Civil Service: two languages are required, and earn a high percentage of marks as before, and in addition very high marks are given for essay and general intelligence as shown in the interview; but this phase will be dealt with in a later chapter.

I ought to say a word about the candidates. I have already said that the first institution of a competitive examination made little difference, nor did the stiffening of the examination make so much difference as may have been expected; for the Diplomatic Service there was still, until 1919, the necessity of having private means, and for the Foreign Office, where this necessity did not exist, there was a general feeling, I believe, that it was not of much use to apply for a nomination unless a candidate had friends of influence. It is apparently part of human nature to believe that "influence" is supreme, even where this is not the case, and parents as a rule are much less pushing and less

enterprising than might be expected. Speaking generally from experience, even of the period before the War, I should say that although some men may seem to have had more favoured careers than others, this has been due to their own qualities rather than to regard for their social position or connections.

Since the War the openness of the competition has become better known, but even now I know of desirable candidates who have not come forward because they believed that private fortunes were essential. Of the clerks on the diplomatic establishment of the Foreign Office whose names appear in the Foreign Office list for 1919, the last before the post-war men appeared, half were Etonians, that is, twenty-two out of forty-four; and that not because any special favour was shown to Eton, but because the sort of people who wanted nominations mostly came from Eton; now the proportion is less than a fourth. Although the Etonian character of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service has been a favourite subject for criticism, I think that the critics have been too ready to assume that the Service suffered in consequence.

No account of the Foreign Office examination would be complete without a reference to Scoones of Garrick Street. When I went up for the examination, I believe that in twenty years there had not been more than one successful candidate for the Foreign Office who had not been to that famous crammer. Of the dozen or so candidates who went up with me, there was one from another crammer, and he got no marks at all. The teaching was certainly very good, and I believe the Private

Secretaries had considerable confidence in Scoones's personal opinion about candidates. He, of course, knew the tricks of the trade, but he had teachers both for foreign languages and history who were highly qualified. Mr. Scoones himself died many years ago, but his establishment still exists under the admirable conduct of M. Turquet, and I believe there are now several successful crammers. Some such establishment is almost necessary, if men are to keep a hold on their special subjects as well as on the subjects in which they took degrees or passed other higher examinations.

Health has always been an important qualification, especially for the Diplomatic Service, which to-day means for all candidates. It is not any one who can live with equal complacency on the sea coast or 10,000 feet above the sea, in Scandinavia or in the Tropics. The test seems to be generally adequate, and a junior Liberal Minister once told me that to him, who had lived all his life in the suburbs of London, it was almost incredible that men could transfer themselves at short notice from Mexico to Norway without turning a hair. Nor will I leave the subject without quoting another junior Liberal Minister who, when attacked by some colleague in the House of Commons about the supposed aristocratic atmosphere of the Foreign Office, made the somewhat ambiguous defence: "Not at all; they are as common as you or I."

## Chapter V

### THE AGE OF INQUIRY

IN spite of the eloquent protest of Mr. Conyngham, Lord Palmerston, as we have seen, consented to a public inquiry into the organisation of the Foreign Office. In 1861, 1870, and 1871 there were Select Committees on the Diplomatic and Consular Services, which involved many questions about the Foreign Office itself; and in 1890 the Foreign Office came under the survey of a Royal Commission on the Civil Service.

The reports of 1861 and 1871 both contain one point which particularly affects the Foreign Office. The Committee of 1861 recommended that exchanges between the two branches of the Service should be allowed under the sanction of the Secretary of State; that of 1871, that it should be encouraged and facilitated as much as possible. Before all the Committees a great quantity of evidence was given by members of both Services, and by such men as Mr. Arthur Otway, who was Parliamentary Under Secretary in 1868-1869, in favour of free interchange between the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service; but Lord Clarendon and Edmund Hammond, who was Permanent Under Secretary from 1854 to 1873, frowned severely on any idea of interchange between

the higher ranks. The Royal Commission of 1890 recommended amalgamation. The question may almost be said, eventually, to have solved itself. Exchanges, some temporary and some permanent, and transfers without exchange became so increasingly frequent that, even without the final recommendation of the Royal Commission of 1914, the amalgamation of the two Services must have come about. Nature must have its way.

Mr. Hammond, afterwards Lord Hammond, was a son of Canning's Under Secretary. He was both at Eton and Harrow, took honours at Oxford in 1823, and became a Fellow of University College; consequently he was easily among the literate. He was a clerk in the Council Office from 1823 to 5th April 1824, when he joined the Foreign Office, and he retired nearly fifty years later, on 10th October 1875. He was made a Peer in 1874. His foreign service was confined to two special missions under Sir Stratford Canning, and one under Lord John Russell, but he declared in evidence that he felt the advantage of it every day. Nevertheless, he said in 1851 that no one above a second-class junior clerk should be allowed to exchange places with a member of the Diplomatic Service. He was in many ways the prototype of two other Under Secretaries, Sir Thomas Sanderson and Sir Eyre Crowe. He was a tremendous patriot; not only a patriotic Englishman, but a patriotic member of the Foreign Office. Sir Eyre Crowe, given the opportunity, might have made just such a peroration as Mr. Hammond did when closing his evidence in 1870.

“I have been endeavouring to explain the proceedings and to uphold the interests of the Diplomatic Service and the office which I serve. We have been misinterpreted and misunderstood ; we have been decried and vilified in a manner and to an extent that I venture to say no other public office in this or any other country has ever been decried and vilified. We did not doubt, however, that sooner or later an opportunity would be afforded to us of justifying our conduct and defending our character before the only tribunal to which public officers when assailed can properly appeal ; and we felt assured that an impartial Committee of the House of Commons would do us that justice which in our consciences we believe and know that we deserve, and which on behalf of the two Services, I claim from the Committee.”

Elsewhere \* he says of his staff : “ Long as I have been in the office, I have never known the clerks in the office daunted by any amount of work or shrink from any amount of sacrifice.” And † he speaks of the office being conducted on a system of perfect confidence, perfect goodwill, and no suspicion. “ More work is done in the Foreign Office than people will give it credit for, because the men there work with a will, and with an esprit de corps, and there is no heartburning among them. ‡ The men look upon each other like brothers.”

Here is Mr. Otway’s account § of Hammond himself :

“ It would be difficult for me to speak of Mr.

\* No. 1898.

† 1861, No. 433.

‡ 1870, No. 41.

§ 1871, No. 1144.

Hammond too highly in some ways ; his capacity is very great ; his zeal and ability are remarkable ; and a singular circumstance about him is this, that when he is exceedingly ill, he seems to me always to work just as well as when he is in perfect health ; and he is not content with his own work, but he generally wishes to do that of everybody else besides."

This testimony might equally have been paid to Sir Thomas Sanderson and Sir Eyre Crowe, and especially, as regards his neglect and sacrifice of his health, to Crowe.

Otway went on to urge the necessity of giving more initiative to other members of the staff besides the Under Secretary.

I pause to point out that up to this milestone the Office was still, as in the eighteenth century, occupied entirely with the purest routine.

Otway says : "It is undeniable that the system which has grown up has tended to concentrate all the important work of the Foreign Office, indeed, almost all the work of the Foreign Office, in his hands. . . . I think that when Mr. Hammond retires, we shall find that, with many very competent men in the office, there will not be one ready to take his place." The clerks, he adds, never having any opportunity of giving their opinions, had no exercise for their minds, and were reduced to mere copyists.

He recommended that the Foreign Office should adopt, as they did adopt thirty-five years later, the Colonial Office system, and that clerks should make their observations on the despatches as they arrived

and then send them to the Under Secretaries. Only papers of importance should be sent to the Secretary of State. He believed that the mass of unimportant work killed Lord Clarendon; it used to make him melancholy to see the heap of trash sent up to the Secretary of State. This was not Hammond's view. He believed \* that the Secretary of State could hardly have a department in his office for every minute detail of which he was not responsible. Here we may note that Lord Salisbury, too, believed that a Minister could not have proper control of his department if he did not control the details.† Mr. Otway, talking of the drafting of despatches,‡ says that Lord Clarendon wrote his minutes so fully that really there was hardly a word altered in them. Other despatches were nearly all written by Mr. Hammond himself for his side of the office; "side" referring to the division of countries between the Permanent and Political Under Secretaries which was still in practice. On the Political Under Secretary's side, senior clerks were sometimes allowed to draft a despatch.

It is odd that after this Mr. Otway utterly condemned the style of the Foreign Office draft writing. French despatches were infinitely superior to ours, § so beautifully written and the style so much better. "Ours is a very slipshod style"; and again, "The Russians write beautiful despatches and I suppose there are no despatches that can excel, if they can compare with, those of Ali Pacha, which

\* 1871, No. 1674.

† *Life of Robert, Marquess of Salisbury*, iii. 313.

‡ No. 1220.

§ No 1222.



are always in French." "Our despatches are slipshod: there is no composition in them." Mr. Kinnaird, one of the Committee, also said that he had heard foreigners comment on the slipshod style of our despatches, to which Mr. Otway replied that Lord Clarendon himself did not think highly of them.

I think they must have drifted into talking of despatches written abroad. I cannot conceive that Hammond was slipshod whatever may be thought of his style, although Lord Granville\* did find fault with some of his subordinates. Certainly in later years the Foreign Office acquired a very high reputation for style. Sir Thomas Sanderson was an ideal draftsman, and Sir Eyre Crowe extremely clear and careful, and neither would have allowed anything that was not good to escape their observation.

To return to Hammond; one witness in 1871 had the courage, while praising Hammond, to fill up some obvious blanks left by Otway. Mr. Christie, of the Diplomatic Service, speaking of some matter concerning the Consular Service, on which he and Mr. Hammond had disagreed rather violently, says: "Mr. Hammond is a gentleman incapable of trickery, a gentleman of honour, I have the greatest respect for him personally; I do not think there is a more honourable man on earth; he may be mistaken in some matters and prejudiced."

Prejudiced Hammond certainly was about the Diplomatic Service. So, I think, it would be fair

\* See page 105.

to say, were Sanderson and Crowe. They all had great admiration for the work done under their own direction, and could hardly believe that any one else would do it nearly as well. Hammond, therefore, resisted with his whole strength any attempt to amalgamate the Foreign Office with the Diplomatic Service, or to allow any interchange between the senior ranks. Crowe liked it almost as little. Again and again Hammond urged that the Foreign Office would be ruined by allowing men from abroad to take the place of the heads of his departments: it would be a disaster; it was unthinkable; only men with long experience could do the work. And what work: taking care that the papers were quickly sent to the Under Secretaries; occasionally drafting an unimportant letter; looking up the facts about some case on which the Secretary of State desired information; preparing material for answers to Parliamentary Questions. These were their highest efforts. Almost one is inclined to say now that Mr. Spring Rice's boy of fourteen could have done the work of a senior clerk in the Foreign Office as well as he could have passed the entrance examination.

Hammond had not even a good word to say for copying machines. He was sure the work could be done quicker by hand.

Mr. Christie, who had been Minister in Brazil, presented a valuable paper to the Commission of 1871; he recommended that the Permanent Under Secretary should always have had foreign experience; that there should be a legal element in the office; that the independence of British representatives

abroad should be encouraged, so as to counteract the centralising tendencies of the office ; that there should be copying clerks ; that there should be more publicity ; for instance, a Committee of both Houses of Parliament for foreign affairs, to whom secret matters could be trusted ; amalgamation of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service. Finally, he thought the Foreign Office and the Permanent Under Secretary undertook too much. In the course of the paper he observed that Mr. Hammond, who had sometimes described the clerks of the Foreign Office as if they were superior to those of all other offices, made an unjustly low estimate of the qualifications of a Foreign Office clerk.

This opens a very interesting question. It brings us to the conundrum whether the Office is made for the clerks or the clerks for the Office. If too much insistence is placed on the theory, which at first seems correct, that the clerks are made for the Office, you are apt to get a very indifferent set of clerks. When it was decided that the qualifications for a clerkship should be very high, it was probably not foreseen that candidates who had passed a stiff examination, which made them feel equal to serious work, would not be content to spend twenty or five-and-twenty years in copying out other people's despatches in a fair round hand. What actually happened was that the entrance examination, as we have seen, was made stiffer and stiffer until only first-class men had a chance of passing it ; then these first-class men said more and more loudly, "the work is not good enough" ; and in 1905-1906 that work was altered, partly, at any

rate, to suit the men. It is true that some of the men who entered before the days of examinations were themselves first-class men, but they were coming by sheer favour into a privileged office where they met their friends, and they were not always out to make a career. As time went on and the field of nomination grew wider ; as the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service became careers, it was impossible to maintain the old system of working the Office.

Before the Renaissance the clergy were the only educated men ; they were clerks : an educated man, even if not a priest, claimed benefit of clergy : educated men and clerks were synonymous. Are we reverting to that idea ? In the East multitudes of young men go through a University education and then, as a matter of course, expect clerical employment which, equally of course, does not exist in sufficient quantity. Happiness will only come when we learn that education is not waste of money if it does not end in a black coat, and that there is quite another benefit of clergy with which we must be content.

Possibly, therefore, Hammond might make out a case. He only wanted pleasant, industrious, trustworthy men to copy despatches ; why insist that they must be brilliant scholars ?

There was, however, another side to the question. The work of the Office was rapidly increasing (51,000 papers in 1869). It was in constant correspondence with parts of the world which until recently had given but little trouble. Ought not responsibility and initiative to be more widely

distributed in the Office so as to relieve the Secretary of State of an impossible burden? Hammond did not think so, but almost any one else would have said "yes" to such a proposition. Yet very little was done in that direction. As the staff grew bigger, its management became more complicated, and the Secretary of State did not concern himself much with that. Minor commercial questions were dealt with by the Parliamentary Under Secretary; but masses of papers on all manner of subjects were still sent to the Secretary of State. The last chief under whom I served in the Office was Lord Curzon of Kedleston, and his attention to details was not unlike that of Lord Clarendon. Lord Curzon's burden was infinitely greater; not merely because a much larger number of papers were sent to him for consideration, but because with them came also for consideration voluminous suggestions from the junior clerks, the senior clerks, and the Under Secretaries. That, at least, is one way of looking at the matter.

We must reconsider it when we come to 1906; but, meanwhile, it may be prudent not to condemn Hammond too hastily.

Beyond the recommendations as to interchange between the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, the Commissions of 1861 and 1871 made none that concerned the Office, except for a paragraph in the 1871 report about Agencies.

Things therefore went on as before, and the staff was drawn from the same class. Mr. Rylands' reminder \* that some of the most distinguished

\* 1870, No. 305.

persons, Archbishops and Lord Chancellors, had been sons of barbers and butchers, had no effect. It is curious to consider whether Wolsey would have been rejected by a Selection Board. Almost certainly he would. If he had scraped through, I doubt whether he would have been distinguished by esprit de corps or self sacrifice. Mr. Hammond, referring \* to the necessity under which he had once found himself of spending two hours in making out, late at night, a mistake in a ciphered telegram, says : "Nobody can tell the strain upon the mental and bodily capacity of a man from being put upon those things at what may be called unlawful hours." There, I feel, Wolsey would have come through the ordeal pretty easily. Again, Hammond speaks of an occasion † on which he was promoted over the head of one of his seniors. He had never felt more pained in his life. He did what he could to prevent it happening. He was overruled and he was promoted ; but it was a very sad and painful history. I doubt greatly whether Wolsey would have felt like that.

On one subject Hammond ‡ had unorthodox views from a diplomatic point of view. He hoped that at the present day no one in this country troubled himself about precedence. It was one of those things which seemed to him so thoroughly insignificant that he had never troubled himself to think about it, though he had heard a story that two Ambassadors with their suites once had a fight over it in Parliament Street. There he was mistaken. We are not so democratic as that even

\* 1870, No 316.

† No. 389.

‡ No 431.

yet. Moreover, precedence does not merely mean a question as to the order of going into dinner ; it may, still more it might fifty years ago, mean influence, which to a diplomatist is sometimes of considerable importance. Hammond admitted that in the case of Ambassadors their special right of claiming an audience of the Sovereign was important, but there is more than that. I remember to have seen in the waiting-room at the Foreign Office Ministers who had been waiting for an hour, or even two, to see the Secretary of State, and had been repeatedly kept out by the sudden arrival of an Ambassador. Abdul Hamid seldom saw Ministers. When I was at Constantinople in 1907 he did see the Belgian Minister, who had been clamouring for the last twelve months for an audience. His Majesty opened the conversation with the words : " M. le Ministre ; je regrette de ne pas avoir pu vous recevoir la semaine passée." Precedence, too, was involved in the question of the *décanat* ; that is, who, as senior member of the Corps Diplomatique, was to speak on its behalf.

A change, recommended by Mr. Rylands in a draft report in 1871, was to put the Political Under Secretary over the Permanent Under Secretary. Mr. Otway was also in favour of this ; he thought that the Political Under Secretary should be the Secretary of State's chief adviser, and that the arrangement would lead to greater economy. I doubt whether even Mr. Hammond would have thought that this was a case in which precedence was of no importance. As a matter of fact, far from this view being adopted in later years, the change

was in the other direction. The Political Under Secretary came to have less and less influence. Even in 1861 Lord Stanley said that he constantly consulted with Mr. Hammond upon all the business of the Office, and did not think it mattered that the Political Under Secretary was overshadowed.

Lord Derby, who was a witness, was somewhat of Hammond's way of thinking about examinations. A striking point in his evidence was a defence of the Diplomatic Service against the suggested charge of being responsible for involving this country in war. He declared with great conviction that it must not be supposed that a diplomatist in any foreign country could involve his country in a war without the Foreign Office being a consenting party. He admitted that a diplomatist might mislead the Foreign Office, but he evidently thought that unlikely to any extent which would have serious results.

Lord Malmesbury \* took a similar line, and knew instances where war had been prevented by the diplomatic action of Ministers of this country, in a way which was quite unknown to public opinion outside. He thought that if war was prevented in a generation, this country would have a tenfold return for the money expended on the Diplomatic Service. He did not think † diplomacy had ever been the cause of a war. Mr. Rylands, upon this, suggested that our wars with Russia, China, and Abyssinia were all due to diplomatic blunders. Lord Malmesbury would not have it, though a speech of his own in the House of Lords, blaming

\* No. 756.

† No. 1167.



Mr. Bruce for being too precipitate in the case of the war with China, was quoted against him; and subsequent questions and answers bore out Malmesbury's opinion. The case of Abyssinia is dealt with in a later chapter. Mr. Rylands' view is interesting, because he seems to believe that war with Russia might have been avoided, if our diplomatic representative had intimated to the Russian Government that any action in relation to Turkey would lead to war. This is a manifest absurdity. No diplomatic representative could use such language except on instructions from the Secretary of State. Much the same thing has been said about the Great War, but I do not think that any one ever went so far as to hold Sir Edward Goschen responsible for the outbreak of war because he did not threaten intervention, even if some critics may have supposed that Sir Edward Grey could have given the necessary instructions while aware that the Cabinet was not behind him.

Having given the views of Hammond and Lord Derby against the necessity for a high educational standard, I ought to quote a remarkable statement on the other side made in 1861 by Mr. Walrond, a Civil Service Commission Examiner, and a former Rugby Master and Tutor of Balliol. Looking back to his Oxford days, he was prepared to say that, comparing one class with another, it was the experience of every one that the men who took honours were, as a general rule, superior in moral character to the men who did not. And yet I have heard it said at King's College, Cambridge, where we all took honours, that for the good of the College it

was a pity we could not have some more stupid men.

One more curious feature of the 1870 inquiry is the concern shown about the proportion of men belonging to noble families in the Diplomatic Service. The Foreign Office is not actually mentioned, but the same question arises. Mr. Hammond,\* "giving to the credit of noble families all that you could possibly assign to them," came to the conclusion that there were fifty connected with noble families, against seventy not so connected. Whether he included those whose mothers or wives belonged to noble families, does not appear. As in the case of Etonians, the truth is simply that so long as the Diplomatic Service was very ill paid in all but the highest posts, and service in the Foreign Office without the chance of going abroad had no special attractions for those in search of a career, only men from a certain class were likely to ask for nominations: the class which thought some kind of public service without much remuneration their proper sphere of action. Lord Derby, indeed, commented on the small number of those who did ask for nominations.

It may be observed here that the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service did, until recently, include a fair number of peers, and one of the questions which has frequently recurred is that of their right to vote in the House of Lords.

There seems to have been more disposition to object to Foreign Office clerks voting than to diplomats exercising that privilege. Even in 1905,

\* No. 295.

Lord Granville and Lord Acton were made lords-in-waiting, and as such became members of the Administration, and frequently voted. Lord Onslow, who was a clerk, raised the question as regards himself in 1911, and Sir Edward Grey decided that he might vote, but take no other part in the proceedings of the House. Later, Lord Drogheda's election as an Irish Representative Peer created fresh discussion, but gave rise to no new decision. It is now held that a peer in the Service may merely sit and listen, and neither speak nor vote.

Malmesbury, Russell, and Clarendon twice succeeded each other as Secretary of State between 1852 and 1866; then came Derby and Clarendon again, and then Lord Granville, who is a sort of connecting link with modern times.

Granville had already been Under Secretary in 1840, and Secretary of State for a couple of months in 1851-1852. When he came there as Under Secretary he was singularly modest.\* The part of his work which he found most disagreeable was the correction of the drafts of despatches drawn up by some of the oldest and best clerks of the office.

"J. Bandinel, for instance, who, I believe, knows as much about his department, the Slave Trade, as any one can know on such a subject, expresses himself very awkwardly. It is disagreeable for me to correct, as if he was a schoolboy, all his sentences, besides my not having very great confidence in my own English; and yet, if I do not do this, Palmerston sends it back slashed about with very cutting

\* *Life of Lord Granville*, by Lord Fitzmaurice, i. 29.

observations." Before he left office in 1852 he wrote: "... having\* had more opportunities than those of my predecessors who were never Under Secretaries of observing the untiring zeal and public spirit which animates the whole of this department, and I can say with truth that it was this knowledge which induced me principally to accept an office of which I know the difficulty."

Indeed, the Commission of 1861 noticed† that it had been stated by successive Secretaries of State that nothing could exceed the diligence, activity, and good service of the heads of all of the departments in the Foreign Office.

Possibly discipline relaxed under Lord Granville's second administration, especially as Hammond was growing old, and this may have led to the strictures which are quoted by the *Cambridge History*, as having been made by Disraeli on the Foreign Office under the fifteenth Earl of Derby. Otherwise there are few traces of slackness. One criticism Addington and Lenox-Conyngham had thought necessary in 1853, when they said‡ visitors were not to be admitted to lounge into the working rooms. A distinction was to be drawn between members of the Diplomatic Service and "mere idling, smoking, beer drinking, *dolce far niente* of the London fashionable world."

The ban on *dolce far niente* was not entirely effective; for forty years later they were occasionally to be found in the working rooms.

Again, in 1860,§ there had been some laxity

\* F.O. Conf. Gen., No. 4.

† No. 3177.

‡ F.O. Conf. Gen., No. 4.

§ F.O. Conf. Gen., No. 4.

about attendance, which was thought unjustifiable, seeing that the annual leave of absence had lately been extended to two calendar months. Six hours' attendance, 12 to 6 or 11 to 5, was to be the minimum, and as far as possible the indiscriminate resort of visitors was to be discountenanced and discouraged.

In Lord Granville's time there was something worse, for it was openly said in the Cabinet that the Foreign Office handwriting had deteriorated, and he had been obliged to sit silent.

In one respect Granville was a modern Foreign Secretary, if we may accept the testimony given by Lord Salisbury on his rival's death. Lord Salisbury wrote of Granville's \* unswerving loyalty to his colleagues : " His foreign policy was the foreign policy of the Cabinet. The administration of the Foreign Office ought never to be, and certainly never was in his hands, as personal or even as predominantly departmental as the administration of the then great departments often is and safely may be."

Meanwhile there had been other changes in the aspect of the Office.

In 1856 it had been decided to build, partly on the site occupied by the Foreign Office in Downing Street, a great block of offices for some of the principal departments of State : the Home, Foreign, Colonial, and India Offices and the Local Government Board. A Committee, on which the then Lord Robert Cecil served, was appointed to consider the plans.

Hammond gave evidence.† Stout Conservative

\* *Life of Lord Granville*, ii. 506.

† F.O. Gen., No. 2, 1799-1867.

as he was, he had not a good word to say for the old office. It was most incommodious and not fireproof. The papers in the State Paper Office were not easy enough of access, if, for instance, they were wanted on Sundays or in the middle of the night. There was no place for supervision. If the opening of Japan to foreigners led to diplomatic dealings between the two countries, there would be no room for a new department. Nevertheless, his ideas of a new office were not very large. It was particularly desirable, he thought, that the Secretary of State, the Under Secretaries, and the Senior Clerks should be on the same floor, as there was a terrible waste of time when they were separated, in a basement, principal floor, and attic. He urged that there should be no residence for the Secretary of State, as it would be impossible to suit all tastes. One might have twelve children and another none. There should be no door into the Colonial Office or other adjacent offices, as this would lead to distractions; and there should be no telegraph office, as the tendency of the telegraph was to make every one in a hurry. Elsewhere he said that in such a rabbit-warren as the old office it was impossible to prevent strangers from coming in and perhaps seeing confidential papers.

Very little attention was paid to these ideas. Hammond, by the way, did not refer before the Committee to the behaviour of some of his staff in the house in Fludyer Street, where, according to Sir Edward Hertslet, they were given to practical jokes. One letter of complaint at least remains in the archives. A. W. Justin writes, on 22nd April

1847, to remonstrate against peashooters and water-spouts being used, not as a harmless joke, but to insult a lady and spoil her servants' new liveries.

When the new building was begun the Foreign Office was moved temporarily to Whitehall Gardens, from which its authorities eventually brought back some beautiful Adam mantelpieces.

In 1868 the staff took possession of the present familiar office, and on 1st July began work there under Lord Stanley. The mere fact of occupying magnificent suites of rooms may have increased the feeling that those using them should have something better to do than copying. Mr. Hammond, I fancy, felt a little ill at ease there; he speaks of the difficulty of communication between himself and the Chief Clerk, when they were separated by a hundred yards of passage.

By this time he had other assistance, if he cared to avail himself of it, in the management of the Office, for an Assistant Under Secretary had been appointed in 1858. This was Mr. Murray, who had then thirty-two years' service and must have known the work if any one did. He appears to have confined himself, however, more or less to the Consular Department. He was succeeded in 1869 by Mr. Charles Spring Rice who, as we have seen, was a reformer, but one whose reforms remained on paper, for he died the following year. He was the father of Sir Cecil Spring Rice. Spring Rice was succeeded by Lord Odo Russell. He, too, only remained at the Foreign Office a year, and for several months of that time he was employed on a special mission to Bismarck at the German Headquarters at Versailles. In 1871 he became Ambas-

sador at Berlin. Then, for the last two years of Hammond's reign, came Lord Tenterden, who succeeded him as Permanent Under Secretary in 1873.

There had been an idea of appointing Sir Robert Morier, who was bitterly disappointed at not going to the Foreign Office, which he had intended to reform. He complained to Jowett \* of the hopelessness of all attempts to interest British beadledom in the work of diplomatists. Odo Russell apparently agreed with him. It had been Lord Derby who raised Morier's hopes, but subsequently thought him too much in earnest.

Lord Tenterden did not leave any great mark on the Office. He followed closely in the footsteps of Hammond, and among other things insisted, so Sir Charles Dilke told the Royal Commission of 1890, on every paper being sent to the Secretary of State for decision. When, in 1877, Lord Salisbury was on his way to Constantinople for the International Conference of that year, he stopped on his way at Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Rome, to confer with the respective Governments, much against the advice of Tenterden; but Disraeli had urged him to trust his own intuitions † rather than the promptings of "Tenterdenism." Of Tenterden I think we need say no more, except that he did good service at Geneva during the Alabama arbitration, and that his personal appearance must have been peculiar. Dilke ‡ says: "I have seen two men, both in the Foreign Office service, that looked like bears—Lord Tenterden, a little blackgraminivorous European

\* Morier's *Memoirs and Letters*, ii. 290 (letter to Jowett).

† *History of British Foreign Policy*, iii. 110.

‡ *Life of Sir Charles Dilke* (Gwynn and Tuckwell), i. 266.



bear ; old White a polar bear, if ever I saw one."

It was not even Tenterden, but Hammond, who, on 3rd July 1870, told Granville that he had never known so great a lull in foreign affairs, and that he was not aware of any important question that he (Lord Granville) should have to deal with. This occurred less than three weeks before the outbreak of war between France and Prussia. It is, however, fair to add that Hammond maintained that he had mentioned the Franco-Prussian tension over the Hohenzollern candidature, but Granville was a little deaf, and did not apprehend this reservation. A clerk who worked under me in the Chief Clerk's department once told me that he always refused to believe that any man who showed hopeless stupidity over his accounts was, as he was sometimes assured, really extremely able. I am disposed to think that any man who was so utterly unable as Hammond to visualise any better organisation of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, than that to which he was accustomed, might be expected to be unable to visualise the possibility of war.

According to Lord Fitzmaurice's life \*, Lord Granville shares with Lord Salisbury the distinction of breaking down the wall between the Diplomatic and Consular Services in order to introduce Sir William White, and also deserves credit for refusing to be prevented from appointing Sir Julian Pauncefote to the highest permanent post in the Foreign Office by the objection that it was contrary to tradition. I am not sure that there is really much

\* Vol. ii. 452.

to be said for these claims. The wall in question can hardly be said to have been broken down at all : both the statesmen named gave one or two Ministers' posts to members of the Consular Service. Sir William White is the classic instance, and he rather drifted into the Diplomatic Service, if the term drift may be used of so distinguished a diplomat. Having been Consul at Dantzic and Acting Consul-General at Warsaw, he was made by Lord Derby Agent and Consul-General at Belgrade, so that he had one foot in the Diplomatic Service when he went to the Conference at Constantinople in 1876-1877 ; having done very useful service there, he was promoted by Lord Salisbury to be Minister at Bucharest. China has always been an exception to the rule. Mr. Alcock and Mr. Wade, both ex-Consuls, held the post from 1865 to 1883 ; then came Parkes from Japan, after whose death Lord Granville appointed a regular diplomat ; since then there have been at Peking Sir Claude MacDonald, originally a soldier, Sir Ernest Satow, and Sir John Jordan, all formerly of the Consular Service.

As to the appointment of Sir Julian Pauncefote, who was already Legal Assistant Under Secretary, to be Permanent Under Secretary, I find it difficult to believe that there was need for extraordinary courage ; the other candidate was presumably Philip Currie, who was very closely associated with Lord Salisbury. Granville himself says of Pauncefote \* : " I have the highest opinion of his abilities, character, and industry. He is popular in the Office and with the Corps Diplomatique, an excellent

\* *Life*, ii. 446.

Frenchman, and his knowledge of law is constantly of use." The office was perhaps less delighted at Pauncefote's promotion than its chief.

I have said that in the eighteenth century the Prime Ministers, Walpole, Chatham, Pitt, frequently exercised control over the Secretary of State, much as in the seventeenth century the Sovereign had done. In the nineteenth century many of the Secretaries of State were more independent; notably Canning and Castlereagh in the early part of the century, and Palmerston in the middle. The Duke of Wellington closely watched Lord Dudley and Lord Aberdeen; Clarendon, who had the full trust of his colleagues, was not over-shadowed; but Granville and the fifteenth Earl of Derby had rather more difficulty. Granville had to point out to Mr. Gladstone \* that the Prime Minister should only appear as *deus ex machina*, and should not interview foreign Ministers or try to control foreign affairs in ordinary circumstances. Lord Derby was much harried by Disraeli; then came Lord Salisbury, who was his own master throughout his many years of office. It would be indiscreet, perhaps, to refer to the last decade.

This harrying of Lord Derby requires some comment. The Prime Minister wrote to his Foreign Secretary in the tone of a rather ill-tempered Head Master addressing one of his assistant masters: † "I must, I am sorry to say, again complain of the want of order and discipline in your Office," and later, "I must again complain and request your personal attention"; while he frequently abuses the Ambassadors and Ministers as incompetent

\* *Life*, ii. 64.

† Buckle, vi. 23, 48.

mediocrities. I feel inclined to discount a good deal of this when I find that he spoke almost as bitterly of Lord Salisbury during the Conference at Constantinople, and wrote of Lord Odo Russell as "the worst of all." Moreover much of this trouble arose at the time of the Bulgarian atrocities, and it seems to me that Disraeli's annoyance was partly due to the fact that British representatives were not as Turcophil as he would have wished.

Disraeli does not seem to have been a very generous or very reliable master. Even of Montagu Corry, when he left for a short absence on the score of ill-health, he writes as if that devoted Private Secretary had behaved very badly to him. To Derby he writes almost fulsomely before their disagreement over the Turkish question, after which he begins to write of him in a remarkably different tone. Moreover, he committed one of the most unpardonable offences in carrying on a secret correspondence \* with Layard, when Ambassador at Constantinople, behind Derby's back: a correspondence which must have been quite to his taste, for Layard assured him that Abdul Hamid was one of the most amiable men he had ever met. To the Queen, he writes † of a circular despatch drafted by Lord Salisbury and himself, in order to explain British foreign policy, that it was an attempt to take the composition of important despatches out of the manufactory of the Hammonds and Tenterdens, who have written everything in the Foreign Office jargon during the

\* See *Letter* to Lady Bradford, 6th September 1877.

† Vol. vi. p. 282.

last ten years. Mr. Canning, he said, wrote his own despatches on great occasions, and so did Lord Palmerston. As to this I must admit that some of the specimens of Hammond's language which I have quoted show a strong tendency to stilted and rather pompous style.

Mr. Temperley speaks of the elder Hammond as pompous; I should have thought the epithet more suitable to the younger.

A change of some importance was made in the Office in 1876, when a Legal Assistant Secretary was appointed, in the person of Sir Julian Pauncefote, to help the Secretary of State in cases which were not of sufficient importance to go to the Law Officers, and in the preparation of cases which were submitted to them. Previously, cases which were not of the first importance were submitted to the Queen's Advocate, or, if they were important, to the Law Officers and the Queen's Advocate in association; letters, for some reason, were addressed to the former by their title and to the latter by his name: "Her Majesty's Attorney and Solicitor-General and Dr. Deane."

When Pauncefote, in 1882, became Permanent Under Secretary, he continued to do the legal work, and a second Assistant Under Secretary was appointed to help in the diplomatic work. Four years later a Legal Assistant (afterwards Legal Adviser) was again appointed in the person of Mr. Davidson, who had been Private Secretary to the Lord Chancellor.

The increase of legal business had, in recent years, been very considerable, both in the way of

international disputes and the manifold claims of private persons and traders against foreign Governments. Both of these included cases which, in earlier days, might have been settled in some arbitrary way: might was by now not always right. On the other hand, the number of persons doing business in distant parts of the world, where their rights were most often in jeopardy, became larger and larger as the construction of railways and other civilising agencies, banks, insurance companies, or engineering works, found a field open to them in the Far East or in South America. So far as private cases go, I suppose that we may expect this sort of work to diminish, now that we like to assume that the administration of justice is almost everywhere beyond reproach, and interference in a case which is before the Courts of another country is shocking, except in so flagrant an instance as the recent prosecution of the Metro-Vickers engineers in Russia. International disputes are happily "likely to be still more frequently settled by processes of law.

One of the principles constantly impressed on us by Mr. Davidson, and now familiar, is that private persons are not entitled to consult the Foreign Office, or their national representative as the case may be, on points of law. Over and over again Mr. Davidson pointed out that in such cases they must consult a solicitor. The Foreign Office only stepped in when British subjects had a claim against a foreign Government for denial of justice, or when their legal remedies had been exhausted in vain.

There is, apart from these matters, a good deal of private legal business in which the Foreign Office

has often to express an opinion : in regard, for instance, to marriages abroad, and to domicile and nationality.

The first great question settled by arbitration was the Alabama case between Great Britain and the United States in 1872, in which Tenterden, as Under Secretary, with the title of British Agent, and Sanderson to help him, played an active part. There was the Behring Sea Arbitration in 1892, and the British Guiana Boundary Arbitration nominally with Venezuela, really also with the United States, in 1899. In these two the Foreign Office played a comparatively unimportant part ; although it was represented by an agent, the whole case was managed by the Law Officers. Foreign Office administration was not much concerned once the principle had been settled.

For all these questions of international law there is undoubtedly great advantage in having a lawyer in the Foreign Office, or two—as was the case for a good many years—or three or four, as there now are. One possible difficulty lurks in the path. Sir Edward Davidson, as he became, was very insistent on the fact that he was a lawyer and nothing more ; if he was consulted he stated the law ; if necessary, he advised on the procedure to be followed in legal matters ; but he did not and would not give political advice. Once, at any rate, in his early days he did draw a distinction between his official opinion and his private opinion, explaining, with the imprudence of a new boy, that “ quoad legal adviser ” he thought one thing, and “ quoad Davidson ” he thought another. To many of his colleagues, “ Quoad ” he remained for the rest of his career.

Davidson's principle of restricting himself severely to the legal aspect of a question was an admirable one, so far as it was practicable, for, apart from other reasons, people who consult a lawyer are rather apt to take what he says as gospel, even when he goes outside his province. This applies chiefly to people who are glad to avoid responsibility. In any case, by the time that a legal department is established in close and constant association with the other members of an office, like the Foreign Office, I take it that the lawyers find some difficulty in avoiding work which is not very strictly theirs, and in banishing from their minds anything but the purely legal aspect of a question.

I make these observations, not with the idea of suggesting that the legal department of the Foreign Office has not overcome, or that the lay departments of the Foreign Office have not overcome, these objections, but simply to indicate the difficulties inherent in the transaction of this class of business.

In 1881 there was a general re-organisation of the departments of the Foreign Office, accompanied by some reduction in the numbers of the staff. This left eight departments: Eastern (Europe), Western (Europe), American and Far Eastern, Slave Trade, Commercial, Consular, Treaty, and the Chief Clerk's Department. The superintendence of these departments was divided not between the Permanent and Political Under Secretaries only, but between the Permanent Under Secretary and the Assistant Under Secretary, the Political Under Secretary taking only the Commercial



Department, to which he had been confined since \* 1874. Haters of bureaucracy might say that this was a first step on the downward path.

It was in the process of the reorganisation of 1881 that lower division clerks were first introduced into the Commercial and Consular Departments of the Foreign Office, two in each; but in 1882 the Chief Clerk's Department was the subject of a separate reorganisation, when eight lower division clerks were added to it. At the same time four were added to the Library, and soon afterwards one to the Treaty Department.

There were also supplementary clerks, half-way between the two other classes, who were appointed on the nomination of the Secretary of State, and passed an examination also midway in severity between the other two. Of these there were three in the Chief Clerk's Department, nine in the Library, and later one or two in the Treaty Department.

The evidence of high Foreign Office officials before the Commission of 1890 is pathetic in its insistence on the fact that, except in the case of the archives of past years in the Library, none of the lower division clerks ever saw, even by accident, anything confidential, and that it would be most dangerous to allow them to do so. Sir Philip Currie, speaking † indeed of open competition and not of lower division clerks, foresaw the possibility, by no means remote, of foreign Governments or wicked financiers actually training men at their

\* *Life of Sir Charles Dilke*, i. 314.

† No. 26199.

own expense to be inserted among the staff of the Office. All this anxiety was due to the suggestions of some of the Committee, or the witnesses, not only that there might be open competition, but that the Consular Service should be amalgamated with the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service: that lower division clerks might be entrusted with confidential work, and even that it was very difficult to deny to the men in the lower grades the possibility of promotion to the higher grades.

It seems to me that one point was not kept in sight. Clerks on the diplomatic establishment, that is, Foreign Office clerks in the popular sense, are recruited by means of an exceedingly stiff examination from among men of whom many have taken high degrees at the University. Lower division clerks are recruited by a very mild examination from among men whose education has been on a lower plane. If the lower division clerks are to be promoted to the higher grades, then it seems absurd to take so much trouble about the selection of the others; and that implies that the best brains are not essential. There is something in education or there is not. Several years spent in routine work does not bring a man's brain to the level of a senior wrangler's brain. Precisely the same mistake is made by some business men as regards their staff. Nevertheless, it is right always to be on the look out for a chance of promoting an able second division clerk to better things.

The other point is this: We in England have differed from all other foreign countries in paying

much higher salaries to our judges, magistrates, and civil servants, and believe, I think we may say rightly, that there is a higher standard of incorruptibility in this country in consequence. The Foreign Office clerks were not highly paid, but they belonged to a class which was not much affected by considerations of financial advantage. The witnesses who did not wish to change the character of their staff were, therefore, acting on a thoroughly English instinct. What they did not know was, as I have already observed, that there was a much larger class of incorruptibles than they supposed, and that the tradition of the Foreign Office was a very strong defence.

The Royal Commission of 1890 recommended, with no greater success than its less emphatic predecessors, the amalgamation of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service. Lord Bryce and Sir Charles Dilke were among the witnesses who advocated it, while not in favour of open competition—Dilke \* going so far as to say, as Sir Philip Currie had previously said, that in such a case foreign Governments might train men to go in for the examination.

Dilke and Bryce agreed that the Secretary of State was overloaded with work, and spoke of the waste of time involved in receiving foreign representatives. Since then there has been a growing tendency for the representatives to be satisfied with seeing an Under Secretary or an Assistant Under Secretary; but I recollect one bitter complaint by Lord Lansdowne, speaking, I suppose, in the

\* No. 29065.

shooting season, who declared that a certain Ambassador spent an hour kicking round one turnip.

Sir Philip Currie's evidence was not very illuminating. One answer \* deserves to be recorded : asked for a general idea of the work of the Commercial Department, he said that, if he might put his answer in a concise form, he should say it dealt with commercial matters. He was doubtless thinking of the definition of an Archdeacon as one who performed Archidiaconal functions.

Currie had obviously little idea of what real work meant. He considered that that done by a young diplomat in the Foreign Office before going abroad was very much higher than mere copying ; by this, he seems to have meant drafting letters of a routine character or occasional memoranda, but he admits that the work was principally clerical. To the lady typist who had been imported for the first time in 1889 he gave high praise ; he thought she did her work extraordinarily well, evidently supposing it to require marked ability.

It is noteworthy that a minute † of Lord Granville's is quoted to the effect that promotion to the rank of Senior Clerk would, in future, only be made by merit. This was not a new practice : witness Mr. Hammond's case ; but it has no doubt been followed more frequently, though not very frequently, since Lord Granville's time ; the real barrier is promotion to the rank of Assistant Under Secretary. To have the older man working under the younger in the close companionship of a depart-

\* No. 26234.

† No. 26118.

ment is not a very happy arrangement, and means have generally been found of avoiding it by offering the man to whom promotion is denied some post inside or outside the office, where the sore will not be much felt.

## Chapter VI

### LAST YEARS OF THE OLD FOREIGN OFFICE

I PROPOSE here to describe the Foreign Office as it was when I joined it in March 1893 ; that is, as it was in its last stage before the transformation effected by the reforms of 1905-1906. My belief is that in 1893 the Foreign Office did not differ much in essence from what it had been a century earlier ; the staff was rather larger ; there was a little more decentralisation ; but the spirit of 1893 was the spirit of 1782.

The Secretary of State was Lord Rosebery. His tenure of office only lasted two years, but he earned a considerable reputation, though hardly one to place him among the very great Foreign Ministers. His chief anxieties were caused by the trouble between France and Siam, which affected our interests on the Burmese frontier. I am here concerned, however, only with his domestic administration, which differed notably from that of any of his predecessors, except perhaps Canning, or any of his successors. He took trouble to make the acquaintance not only of the senior, but of the junior members of the staff. He once, within my recollection, went all round the office and spoke to every one, delighting us by supposing that the keeping of the register, which was entrusted in

those fantastic days to a man of twelve years' standing, must be the work of a very junior member of the staff. Batches of the staff, including juniors, were invited to Mentmore. Junior Secretaries abroad were required to send him letters full of the gossip of their post. He gave some kind of prize, a misguided plan, to encourage juniors to take up shorthand. Finally, going a little further down the scale, on leaving the office he gave the messengers and office-keepers a champagne supper, an affair without precedent and never repeated, at any rate in quite the same form.

Lord Rosebery did not initiate any great reforms, but he made one or two minor changes. He insisted that our notes to foreign Ambassadors and Ministers, in which the last relic of Gallicism remained in the shape of the "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur" or "Monsieur le Ministre" with which they started, should in future begin "Your Excellency" or "Sir." On the other hand, he introduced what I believe to be a Scotticism, for he took exception, rightly perhaps, to the word "gratuity" and changed it to "gratification." I never heard, however, more than one "gratification" mentioned, namely, Mr. Baden Powell's, I think, for work connected with the Behring Sea Fisheries. Also we were much intrigued by his initial which ought to have been simply R, but looked like A. R.; we supposed at first that it was a sign of radical tendencies and contempt for the peerage, but came to the conclusion that it was simply an odd R. I see from the *Life* by Lord Crewe that it really was A. R.

When Lord Rosebery left us to become Prime Minister, he did so with reluctance and, according to their respective biographers, both he and Lord Salisbury were homesick for the Foreign Office.

The Permanent Under Secretary was Sir Philip Currie, who had been Lord Salisbury's favourite and confidential Private Secretary. He was a clever man of the world, but not, I imagine, with any claim to first-rate ability. It is evident from Lady Gwendolen Cecil's life of her father that Lord Salisbury, though he liked Currie, did not consult him, or indeed any one, on matters of importance. Currie left the office at the end of 1893 to become Ambassador at Constantinople, when it fell to his lot to deal with Abdul Hamid over the Armenain Massacres. The Assistant Under Secretaries were Sir Villiers Lister and Sir Thomas Sanderson, who succeeded Currie as head of the Office. Lister, a nephew of Lord Clarendon, to whom he had been Private Secretary, was a man of ability, but had fallen out of the running for the first place. My chief recollection of him is that he was so inveterate a smoker that he wore on his finger a sort of ring to hold the cigarette from which he was never parted. Sanderson was a man of great ability and unwearied industry; admirable as a draft writer, for which art his favourite model was Wellington; with a complete mastery of his subjects and wide general knowledge. As I have already mentioned, I have heard him criticised for his unwillingness to offer any suggestions to the Secretary of State; but, in Lord Salisbury's case at any rate, such would not have been welcomed. In a



memorandum of the year 1886,\* it is expressly stated that it is not the practice to draw up memoranda or detailed observations on the despatches which come in, such a practice tending to occasion delay. "Papers are sent to the Under Secretary with such explanations as may seem necessary, and he having noted any further observations or suggestions which he wishes to make, sends them on to the Secretary of State." Suggestions by Under Secretaries were therefore permissible, but my recollection is that they were usually confined to routine and were not suggestions of policy.

I may quote here from Lady Gwendolen Cecil's *Life* † a letter from Lord Salisbury to the Queen about an understanding with Italy:

"Lord Salisbury prays your Majesty to let him have this letter back to copy as it is the sole record he has kept of this conversation. At present he is keeping the matter secret even from the Foreign Office and has told no soul but his colleagues."

Below the Under Secretaries we were still altogether in the old ways. My first department was the Eastern Department. This consisted of Francis Bertie, afterwards Ambassador at Paris, Eric Barington as Assistant, Fairholme, Conyngham Greene, and Tower in the so-called "second room," George Jolliffe, "Johnny" Ford and myself in the "third room." Greene, Tower, Jolliffe and Ford were all diplomats temporarily employed in the Office. The duties of the third room were multifarious but simple. We docketed the newly arrived letters (despatches from the Missions were docketed by

\* F.O. Gen., No. 4, 1879-1887.

† iv. 21.

them), we ciphered and deciphered telegrams; we copied any papers which required copying; we "put by" in their proper files the papers which had been acted on; we made up, that is, packed and fastened up, the bags for our missions abroad. The only original work which I can remember to have done was a small contribution to the annual departmental memorandum. One of us, "the early boy," arrived at eleven to open the presses and docket the letters and telegrams; another came at twelve; the rest between twelve and one. Bertie himself came a little before one, after a déjeuner in the French style. To come later than one, at any rate habitually, as Ford did, was an offence. All this in spite of the efforts which had been made for a generation or more to persuade us and our predecessors to come at latest at twelve; what Sir Charles Dilke called a real twelve. On the other hand we constantly stayed till eight, and Foreign Office clerks were not expected by their friends to be in time for dinner.

The main work of the second room was to keep the registers and to manage the "print"; these were considered quite honourable offices. The "print boy" entered in a book the papers that were sent to the printers; when they came back, distributed copies among the pigeon holes assigned to the various posts abroad, and on bag days collected these copies and despatched them. Occasionally one or another junior might be asked for a small memorandum, or, if the Assistant were away, might be called upon to write routine drafts, such as "approvers" or paraphrases of telegrams. Paraphrases

were required to conceal the cipher if telegrams had to be included in the series of "print." For each important current question such, for instance, as the "Affairs of South Eastern Europe" there was a print series. All papers of any interest which related to the subject were printed, and eventually included in an annual, or perhaps quarterly, volume, to which the juniors had the odious task of contributing an index. The three men whom I have named as forming the second room in March 1893 had respectively fifteen, twelve and eight years' service. I rather think it was the senior who did the print.

On one occasion the Eastern Department enjoyed quite a run of slack days, for which, times being generally busy, they could not account, but which they accepted cheerfully. Eventually the reason for this peacefulness was discovered. A bright youth having quickly mastered his lessons, zealously took on the duties of "early boy" for some days: he docketed the letters with great accuracy, and with equal accuracy put them at once into their correct places in the presses. After a time people began to inquire about letters which had not been answered, messages which had apparently not been received, and so forth. It was then discovered that the new boy had failed to realise that our correspondence had any actuality.

I suppose that sort of mistake told against us; and acuteness in finding wanted papers told in our favour, as well as celerity in ciphering, neatness in handwriting, or dexterity in the use of sealing-wax.

The Assistant in the Department—a rank invented

in 1857—usually wrote the commonplace drafts and the paraphrases, and took charge when the Senior Clerk (the proper title of the Head of Department) was away. The Head of Department “minuted” the papers with which his juniors supplied him, his minutes being usually confined to the routine directions, such as “Print (South-East Europe), copy to Constantinople,” or “Queen, Prime Minister, Print (Asiatic Turkey) copy India Office,” and so forth. Sometimes he added some brief explanation, or reminder, of what had gone before, and he saw that the necessary “previous papers” were duly attached. Sometimes he wrote rather superior drafts, and he corrected, often to their annoyance, the drafts of his subordinates.

All this sounds as if it gave little opportunity for the display of ability, but the Senior Clerk was supposed to have, and did have, a thorough knowledge of what was going on in his sphere, and was expected to be ready to supply information at the shortest possible notice.

Bertie was a very strict taskmaster, according to his lights, insisting on celerity and accuracy, and I believe that our training was very useful and that we constituted an efficient machine. If we failed to find a paper in its proper place he was apt to put on his gloves and fling the whole contents of a press on to the floor and make us sort them. I do not think he ever actually helped us to make up bags or do copies, but the second room frequently did so quite in the spirit of preceding generations. Bertie did, however, in slack hours, contribute to our enjoyment by showing us how high he could kick,

or how to cut candles in two with a sword ; although he had by then abandoned, and even come to discourage, stump cricket.

I make no apology for calling him by his surname *tout court*, and might have done better still to speak of him as Frank Bertie. In that respect the Office was exceedingly democratic. No "Misters" or "Sirs" were allowed. A new boy would not, I suppose, have called the Under Secretaries "Currie" and "Sanderson"; he would have avoided the difficulty by a plain "yes" or "no"; short of that we were all equal. Bertie, if he found it necessary to address his superiors in writing, began his notes "My dear Flop," or "My dear Lamps," even when they dealt with serious subjects. Moreover, when second division clerks appeared on the scene (there were already a few in 1893), they were addressed, and addressed others as, Smith or Jones : whereas in most offices care was taken to mark supposed social differences by a "Mr."

The Eastern Department being my own, I have put it first, but we regarded it, and I believe it was generally regarded, as the most important ; the rest of the Office, indeed, thought that it gave itself airs and considered itself "smart." The African Department, by contrast, rather affected the character of rough country gentlemen, and smoked pipes ; but this development came a little later. One of the consequences of our supposed smartness was that honorary clerks mostly came to us ; but one of Bertie's successors declined a duke as potentially difficult to manage. We had fairly frequent visitors of the *dolce far niente* type so much disapproved by

Hammond and Tenterden, and it was not till considerably later that they were really barred. Among other vivid social recollections of the Eastern Department, though of a few years later than 1893, is that of the conversations carried on by some members of the Department from the window with the Hicks Beach family when they returned from their daily ride in the Park and left their horses at the foot of the steps leading to Downing Street, which were just below our window. Some of these conversations ended in invitations to lunch, which were accepted with a little trepidation by those who wondered what sort of temper "Black Michael" might be in.

Bertie became an Under Secretary at the end of the year, and before leaving us gave a dinner-party at his house in Grosvenor Street to those who had at different times served under him. I remember the admirable claret and the fact that Sir George Dallas, who was one of the party, was reminded of one occasion on which he had been challenged to a duel, and had said, "The man is a fool, but I will fight him." Somehow the duel had been averted, but I do not think that Dallas was ill-pleased at the reminiscence.

The other political departments were the Western (Europe), the African, and the American and Asiatic. This latter combination sounds odd, but I hope that my description of the work done in the departments will show that it was, generally speaking, quite immaterial how those political departments were divided. The work of the African Department alone was to some extent administrative, and so

different in its nature from that of the others, that it must be described in a separate chapter, especially as this aspect of it became more marked with the development of the Protectorates.

The Eastern Department dealt with Russia, Turkey, and the Balkan States, Persia, and Egypt, so that there was hardly ever a time when we were not busy. The Western Department had a quieter life, with less telegraphing, as Paris was within a day's post. They had, however, two Assistants instead of one, the second being occupied almost entirely with a mysterious affair known as the *Bourses d'Etudes*. The Head of the Department was Sir George Dallas, already mentioned. Sir George was a Baronet by inheritance. In the Foreign Office list for 1890, selected at random, I see that below the Assistant Under Secretaries and Chief Clerk there were two K.C.M.G.s (one supposed to have been given by mistake for a C.M.G.), one C.B., and one C.M.G., among those on the diplomatic establishment; while the Librarian, Sir Edward Hertslet, was a Knight and a C.B. In 1931 there were twelve men with the C.M.G. or higher orders, and three with the C.B.E., besides the Librarian, so much has the decoration habit grown.

The registers in the Western Department were kept in 1893 by Hopwood and Cartwright, who had, respectively, twenty-one and eighteen years' service.

The American and Asiatic Department, more commonly known as the China Department, was presided over by Clark Jervoise. In 1894, when trouble began over Siam, it became very busy, and

I was transferred there to help in the elementary work; second and third rooms there were all in one, and duties were more or less interchangeable. I was again in that department when Lord Salisbury's famous despatch to Washington, designed to avert war over Venezuela, went astray. Bag night was always an occasion of turmoil, for it so happened that the bags for North America and the Far East went on the same day; last-minute letters were always holding up the despatch of the bags, while a Home Service Messenger waited impatiently at the door to carry the mails to the station. The bags for Peking, Tokyo, and Bangkok were for some reason sent under cover to the Consul-General at Shanghai, whose duty it was to distribute them. On this particular occasion the Washington bag was, in the excitement of the moment, also put inside one for Tolsyo, and it was not till the Minister opened his mails a month or more later, that the mistake was discovered. We always liked to think that the culprit was the Head of the Department, who had been hard at work like the rest of us. Lord Salisbury took the matter calmly, and merely made some joke about having always expected trouble over that note.

Besides the political departments the Commercial and Consular Departments were also mainly manned by the diplomatic establishment; they will be more particularly described later, but it may be said here that as their work was not kept so closely in the hands of the Secretary of State, there was a small amount of devolution which gave the juniors rather more scope for the use of their brains.



In describing the hierarchy of the Office I have not, so far, gone above the Secretary of State ; there was the Queen.

The Queen was very much on the minds of all of us. Numerous recent biographies have made it quite clear that the Queen intervened continually and often effectively in Foreign Affairs. She did not write minutes as a rule, but she wrote many letters to the Secretary of State and received many from him, and a constant stream of telegrams and despatches was sent to her in the daily boxes. Even when Secretaries of State evaded compliance with her wishes they evidently had much trouble in supplying her with satisfactory reasons for their opposition. I remember an occasion on which Lord Salisbury explained that he had taken some action to please the Italian Government. Sanderson, knowing, or thinking that he knew, that this was not at all the case, ventured, greatly daring, to point out in a note that "Your Lordship has, no doubt accidentally, written Italian." I will not vouch for the exact words of that note, but the answer, I believe I am right in saying, was, "I think you impeach my calligraphy." I presume the matter was left there, for Sanderson was not likely to beard the Secretary of State twice. Traditionally, the Private Secretary, who every year took a ticket for Lord Salisbury in the Derby lottery, always had to pay for it himself, because he dare not ask Lord Salisbury for the requisite sovereign.

In the humbler branches of the Office the Queen was also a cause of anxiety. When we had de-

ciphered or ciphered our telegrams we made copies for distribution in what was known as "blueing ink" on a "jelly." The first copy was naturally the best, and this was always destined for the Queen. Even so, the ink was frequently not black enough, and the copy had to be carefully toasted at the fire. That expedient, too, failed at times, and the Queen was not slow to complain. Then Her Majesty altogether declined to read typewritten documents. As a matter of fact there were for some time after 1893 only one or two typists, but everything that was sent in manuscript for the Queen had to be most carefully written.

The drafts of important despatches were submitted to her, and we had as a rule to await their return with her mark "Appd. V.R. & I." If there was need for haste they were sent off with the note, "In anticipation of the Queen's approval," so that if necessary they could be countermanded by telegraph. Not infrequently they still began, "I have received and laid before the Queen Your Excellency's despatch No. 501 of June 27th and I am commanded by Her Majesty, etc."

The Queen's boxes, one with copies of the telegrams, the others with despatches received, or drafts for approval, went off by Home Service Messenger every evening to Windsor, and, if not every evening, at very frequent intervals to Osborne or Balmoral. Important telegrams were retransmitted in cipher, the first cipher group standing for "Humble duty: following received from."

The Queen was, therefore, very much part of the hierarchy of the Foreign Office.

With the Cabinet we were less acutely concerned. I do not suppose that any of Lord Salisbury's colleagues dreamed of interfering with him, except, according to his biographer, Lord Randolph Churchill, during his short spell of power.\* The day's telegrams were printed, and a sheet containing them was circulated to the members of the Cabinet in pouches which were made up in the third room of the Eastern Department. If they did not return their pouches quickly they had to go without the news; the more high-handed juniors not allowing them to have more than two at a time. Frequently they complained of harshness, but Lord Rosebery, at any rate, backed us up and said he could allow no more "hostages to fortune" in the shape of pouches to go about the country. In a later Government a junior took upon himself to reprimand a Cabinet Minister, anonymously, for his misbehaviour in regard to pouches, and by a pleasant coincidence the angry statesman told the story in high indignation to a brother Minister in the presence of that Minister's son, who was, in fact, the culprit. It was commonly believed that Ministers did not read much of what was sent to them, and not infrequently put it in their waste-paper baskets, at the risk of the contents being sold to the enemy. Still, they liked to believe that they were omniscient, and it was a shock to Lord Cadogan, who had a young cousin in the Office, when on his humorously saying at a dinner party, "You don't

\* *Life of Robert, Marquess of Salisbury*, iii. 322.

mean to say, Henry, that you see all the secret telegrams," he received the answer : " Yes, George, but *you* don't."

Certainly the Foreign Office in those days was a pleasant place. We liked to think our work was beneath us ; but we were a very happy family ; we saw a great deal of what was going on in the world, and we were not too strictly handled.

Lord Rosebery, on becoming Prime Minister in 1894, was succeeded by Lord Kimberley, who remained for only one year. He must have been a cautious statesman, for he used black blotting paper to avoid the risk of having his letters read by spies. My impression is that he was popular with those of his staff with whom he came into contact. At any rate, like several of his predecessors, he started with a good knowledge of Foreign Office ways. He had been Under Secretary for over three years under Lord John Russell and Lord Clarendon ; Minister at St. Petersburg from 1856 to 1858, and again Under Secretary from 1859 to 1861. Lord Granville had had less experience, having only been an Attaché at Paris for a year in his youth and Under Secretary for eighteen months. Lord Clarendon had been Minister at Madrid, and Lord Derby Under Secretary for a short time ; so had Canning ; so afterwards had Lord Grey of Fallodon and Lord Curzon.

Lord Kimberley was succeeded in 1895 by Lord Salisbury, who had already served as Secretary of State from 1878 to 1880 ; in 1885, and throughout the government of 1886-1892, except for Lord Iddesleigh's brief and rather unhappy tenure of the

office. Lord Salisbury, consequently, had a wide knowledge of foreign affairs, but he did not concern himself much with the administration of the Office. Lady Salisbury was reported once to have said that her husband knew no more about the clerks in the Foreign Office than he did about the housemaids at Hatfield, and it was understood that he did not know his own *précis* writer by sight or name. Seeing that he did so much of his work in his own house, that is not wonderful. This aloofness did not, of course, make for general popularity, and the Office liked to believe that the Marvin episode was made possible only because Lord Salisbury preferred to trust an outsider rather than a Foreign Office clerk.

Charles Marvin was a temporary copying clerk supplied by the Civil Service Commissioners to help in the Treaty Department, where Treaties, Royal Letters, and other documents were written out in copper-plate hand. In that capacity he was called upon to copy out the secret Anglo-Russian Agreement of May 1878, memorised it while copying it, and sold it to the *Globe*. He was prosecuted, but, that being before the days of the Official Secrets Act, was acquitted. He tells the whole story, quite unashamedly, in his book, *The Public Offices*, the general veracity of which is rather doubtful. Whether the tradition is correct that Lord Salisbury did not trust the Foreign Office cannot now be verified, but it appears from Marvin's book that the words of the Agreement were dictated to the head of the Treaty Department by Lord Salisbury's private secretary, Currie; that is to say, it did not reach the department through the Under Secretaries,

which would be the natural channel. The Foreign Office has often been blamed for carelessness in this matter. Apparently the ordinary authorities had nothing to do with it: the Treaty Department were told that the documents must be copied with all possible speed and believed that they were to be made known to the House of Commons that night and to the Press next morning, and it did not, rather naturally, occur to them that Marvin might memorise them.

I have said that Lord Salisbury did not know much of the clerks. Notoriously he did not always know his own Ministers. Sometimes his knowledge was unexpected. If he did not know the clerks, he obviously could not be supposed to know the Vice-Consuls. A minute proposing to promote a Vice-Consul to a Consulship might confidently be expected to return with a plain "S."; put there, it was sometimes thought, by his subsequent biographer; once, however, a proposal to promote Vice-Consul A. came back, not with a mere "S.," but with, "Mr. A. beats his wife. S."

The building in which the work of the Foreign Office is now carried on was finished in 1868. From the business point of view it seemed for many years to be very satisfactory; many of the rooms were fine, and there was plenty of margin for expansion; of late years, when the work of the Office has enormously increased, the size of some of the rooms has been seen to be a disadvantage, and there is a good deal of waste space, divided rooms being often unsatisfactory. The Secretary of State's room is of vast size, occupying one floor of the corner tower,

and the Permanent Under Secretary's room below it is also very large. In 1893 this did not matter ; there was room for everybody. The main departments occupied only the ground floor and first floor ; on the ground floor there was also a series of rooms for the Library, and on the first floor the three great reception rooms. Here the Foreign Office party was given by the Secretary of State on the King's Birthday, when the great double staircase, with the guests ascending and filling the open corridors above, provided one of the most magnificent sights in London ; never more magnificent, perhaps, than when Cardinal Vaughan in his scarlet robes, unintentionally no doubt, took his stand at the top of the staircase and held a miniature Court. The rooms near the top of the staircase were turned into supper-rooms, and those below into royal dressing-rooms.

At one of these parties Lady Salisbury had a famous triumph over etiquette. The Prince of Bulgaria, not then recognised by the Powers, was present, and when Lady Salisbury asked him to take her into supper the Austrian Ambassador, who claimed precedence, made in stately protest for the door. Lady Salisbury having reached the supper-room with the Prince made an excuse for leaving again, followed the Ambassador, asked him reproachfully, "*Excellence, ne voulez-vous donc pas me donner le bras ?*" and brought him back in triumph. Up the same great staircase we saw Li Hung Chang, in yellow jacket and peacock's feather, carried in his chair to the Secretary of State's room. In the middle of the second flight the little procession stopped, and, much to our wonderment, the chair was put

down. Then one of the suite solemnly stepped forward and wiped Li Hung Chang's nose, and the procession continued on its way. There was no lift in those days, and messages from the second floor to the printer in the basement gave the juniors plenty of exercise. The first lift to be put in replaced the private staircase which led from the corner of the ground floor, just above the Park door, to the Secretary of State's room. The staircase was bought from the Office of Works by a lady living near London, and as I have heard, eventually sold to an American tourist as a relic of the great Lord Salisbury.

Just inside the Park door were the luncheon-rooms, where the juniors at any rate were all expected to lunch daily. These luncheons were always a fruitful source of dispute between the staff and the higher authorities. There is in the Chief Clerk's department a letter addressed to the then Chief Clerk by one of his colleagues, some time before 1893, which begins: "Having to-day had a plate of maggots set before me." Sir George Dallas, who liked a fine phrase, consulted his department on a stormy day: "Shall I face the elements, or shall I consume the garbage of Mrs. Roberts?" Really in 1893 the food was not bad; but it had ups and downs. At one time Johnny Ford and Hugh Grosvenor, being gourmets, declared themselves unable to stand it any longer, and had an elegant lunch sent in daily by Benoît, which they ate in the Ambassadors' waiting-room, until discovered by a furious Sanderson.

Probably he thought that to eat in the room assigned to Ambassadors was sacrilege of the worst



kind. The authorities were, moreover, particular about dress in those days : Bertie was always horrified at the sight of a straw hat, Sanderson at the sight of a tweed suit. One Monday morning, having returned from a week-end visit, I came to the Office thus attired, and before I had had time to put on an office coat was sent for to Sanderson's room. Henry Foley, the Précis Writer, was standing behind Sanderson's chair, so that I had to stand in full view. Presently Sanderson looked up from the paper on which he was intent, and his eyes filled with horror. " Good heavens ! why are you dressed like that ? What would you have done if you had met an Ambassador ? " Anxious for sympathy in his distress he turned right round to consult Foley, and then for the first time saw that he was attired in a suit of the loudest check.

The rooms set apart for the Ambassadors varied rather often, sometimes one and then another being used. On one of these occasions a new boy with despatches for signature repaired to what had yesterday been the room of the Assistant Under Secretary, saw an elderly gentleman seated at the desk, and placed the despatches respectfully before him. The gentleman stared at them for a moment and then, instead of beginning to sign, looked up and inquired, " I suppose you know that I am the Russian Ambassador ? "

To return for a moment to the luncheon-room, there came a time when nearly all of the staff drifted away to clubs ; the authorities tried to recapture them by making a fine room off the Hall into a luncheon-room and providing a better menu,

of which some of the seniors themselves generally partook. This did not last many years, and when I came to some sort of authority I urged that the practice of lunching out was so universal in London, that it was useless for us to try to prevent it in the Foreign Office. Now no luncheon at all is supplied.

In 1893 there was not only a scarcity of typists, not only no lift, but of course no electric light. Typists came gradually, but long after they were employed in other offices. I well remember a colleague making an appeal to some friend in the Colonial Office for copies of one of their letters, on the ground that while we had no typists they had "to every man a damsel or two." Typists came in due course, but shorthand-writers were very seldom used, except by the Secretary of State, until the War.

Lifts and electric light came too; the latter first, and irregular in its habits. When all the lights went out simultaneously, the staff with one accord rushed to Bertie's door to hear what language he might use.

The second floor of the Office in 1893 was used partly for the Library of printed books; the Consular Department was there, and the Legal Adviser, still in somewhat humble surroundings. The Uganda Railway Committee sat there, and in one room an explorer discovered a second division clerk employed by the Library, who was also a minor poet. Delighted with his find, he was wont to escort parties of friends to the spot, who peeped at the poet one by one. What the poet thought I do not know.

Failing typewriters, we did our copying mostly

with quill pens. Bertie, who was a strict economist, insisted on their being preserved and mended; but I fear we were rather lavish with them. He himself used goose quills of high quality, supposed to be reserved for the Secretary of State. He also strove hard to make us economical of paper, and he did actually succeed in suppressing the privilege, which we believed to be ours, of franking private letters. Even Sanderson had been only mildly indignant when a letter, franked with his name, was returned to him because the addressee had left her house in St. John's Wood and could not be traced.

I have already mentioned the fact that our hours were an elastic 12 to 7 or 8, or later. We were entitled by regulation to two calendar months' leave in the year making nine weeks, besides odd days. This was liberal; on the other hand, we closed very little earlier on Saturdays than on other days, and kept the Office open on all Bank Holidays as a matter of course, and even on Christmas Day, though with a diminished staff. If required, we came back after dinner, turn about, to help the Resident Clerks. Moreover, we did not always get all of our leave; the seniors, in fact, very seldom did, and they habitually worked at night and before coming to the Office: one, I remember, made it a rule not to begin work after dinner till ten. The Under Secretaries regularly received the telegrams at their houses. During the war I mentioned in evidence before one of the innumerable Committees the fact that a large proportion of the staff took work home. The Chairman could not be persuaded that this was not some vicious form of

idleness which might lead to the disclosure of secrets, and the argument that the Office had sometimes to be cleaned carried no weight with him. I do not recollect that this particular Committee achieved anything, although we possibly acquired merit by continuing a session throughout an air raid; and the practice of taking work home has continued and will no doubt continue until the hours between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. can be expanded.

One or two minor activities of ours are perhaps worth mentioning: among them the "translator" system.

In 1886 the task of translating all papers received at the Foreign Office in European languages other than French was confided to three junior clerks, who each received an extra allowance. They were chosen by competitive examination as vacancies occurred, one doing Russian, one Spanish, one Italian, and all three German. In 1894 I passed in Spanish and German and secured one of the places. Russian papers were rare, the Embassy writing in French, and only the expert could deal with them. As to the rest, we took all the work, by weeks about, trusting to what we described as "official grace" to make out those languages in which we were not proficient. Personally, I translated enormous masses not only of Spanish and German, but of Italian, Dutch, and Portuguese, a good deal of it in connexion with South American Boundaries; really, to any one who had taken a classical degree, the commoner languages presented little difficulty. The Scandinavian languages were not too unlike German; of Greek I think we all had some remi-

niscence ; but I remember finding Hungarian too much for me. Fortunately, the more abstruse the language, the less likely the letter was to be serious, and the more likely to be the work of a lunatic or an inventor who had mistaken his genius.

It was not, however, as a translator, but as a clerk in the China Department that I was sent to interview a lady in the waiting-room, who had failed to make herself intelligible to the office-keepers. She did, as a matter of fact, speak English, and I soon discovered that what she wanted was the immediate stoppage of the war between China and Japan. I promised to see about it and write to her in due course, if she would give me her name and address. To this she demurred for some time, but at last took a piece of paper and in a bold hand wrote "Victoria Regina."

The second activity which I have in mind, though perhaps hardly minor, is that of cipher making. In the eighteenth century there was a family of Willes, who seem to have borne the title of decipherers by heredity. One was Bishop of Bath and Wells. It can hardly have been their duty to decipher all the messages from British representatives abroad, but they may have deciphered messages from foreign Governments to their agents in London, and they may have been cipher makers. Ciphers were probably quite simple, merely in the form of a dictionary in which groups of letters or of figures represented each word, and there were not very many of them. We have seen that the cost of a new cipher a hundred years ago was £150, and even then they had to last a long time.

In a report of the year 1861, Mr. Odo Russell, then at Rome, says that he has received cipher C, and has also in his possession cipher B of the year 1830, and T of the year 1820 ; in a life of thirty or forty years a cipher must surely have become well known to every Government in Europe. A similar report of 1800 from Copenhagen mentions ciphers of 1780, 1784, and 1792, so that there had been no change of system during the century. By 1893 ciphers were much less long lived, but I do not suppose that they presented any great difficulty to foreign Governments, particularly in view of the great number of telegrams published, in paraphrase it is true, in Blue books. Occasionally some Mission committed the atrocious crime of handing to a foreign Government an exact translation of a ciphered message, but this was very rare ; and it has happened that a foreign Government has found means of tampering with a bag ; Lord Lytton once left one in a railway restaurant. There was a story of a British Ambassador finding in a Foreign Office envelope not the original despatch but a copy made by the Government to which he was accredited ; another story related how a foreign Sovereign had quoted to a British Ambassador from a Foreign Office despatch which he was by no means supposed to have seen ; both cases within my official memory. Once I was fortunate enough to be able to circulate a notice something like this :

Cipher G No. 86 has been received at Mexico.

Cipher E No. 102 has been received at Naples.

Cipher E No. 23 has been devoured by crocodiles.

Cipher R No. 50 has been withdrawn from Paris ;

the crocodiles (Abyssinian) were, I believe, safe receptacles.

With all this I cannot remember that, at any rate before the War, anything very serious happened in consequence of our ciphers becoming known. That is perhaps because our secrets, if not always *de polichinelle*, are much less numerous and less alarming than romance requires.

As I have not mentioned it before, this seems a suitable place to repeat once more the story of Canning's famous rhymed despatch to Sir Charles Bagot, then Ambassador at The Hague.

Bagot one day received a ciphered despatch in the usual form. To his dismay he discovered, and hastened to report to Canning, that it was in a cipher which he did not possess. By return Canning sent two ciphers, with the aid of which Bagot made out this :

FOREIGN OFFICE,  
31st January 1826.

SIR,

In matters of Commerce the fault of the Dutch  
Is offering too little and asking too much.

The French are with equal advantage content,  
So we clap on Dutch bottoms just 20 per cent.

*Chorus* : 20 per cent., 20 per cent.

[Chorus of English Customs House  
officers and French douaniers.]

(*English*) We clap on Dutch bottoms just 20  
per cent.

(*French*) Vous frapperez Falck avec 20 per  
cent.

I have no other commands from His Majesty to convey to Your Excellency to-day.

I am, with great truth and respect,

Sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient,  
humble Servant,

GEORGE CANNING.

His Excellency

The Right Honourable

Sir Charles Bagot, K.B.

Falck, by the way, was Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The correspondence, which the present Librarian of the Foreign Office secured for the Library at an auction, ends with a private letter from Bagot to Canning, telling him, as we should say, what he thought of him.

Much has been written about this despatch, the best account of it being contained in a pamphlet by Sir Harry Poland ; but no one, I fancy, has so far cavilled at it. I incline to predict that future historians will try to prove it to be a fake. They will ask how a Cabinet Minister could have found the time and the skill to put this despatch into cipher ; Ministers are notoriously inexpert at ciphering ; they never do it ; the critic will perhaps quote a rule, once obtaining in the Intelligence Department of one of the great offices, that all documents must be intelligible to the stupidest Cabinet Minister. If on the other hand we are to believe that Canning did not cipher the despatch himself but left it to his Private Secretaries, how came it that they did not know, or ascertain, what ciphers



were in Bagot's possession? Moreover, the story will be proved false by the statement in Bagot's letter that when he showed the decipher to one of his Secretaries, that gentleman merely said it was oddly worded, and never even discovered that it was not prose. No one can believe that.

The quotation of this despatch gives me the opportunity of mentioning the delightful phrases with which we end our despatches:

"I am with great truth and respect," to our Ambassadors;

"I am with great truth and regard," to Ministers; and

"I am with great truth," to *Chargés d'Affaires*.

Our representatives abroad, writing to the Secretary of State, "have the honour to be, with the highest respect"; and the Secretary of State, writing to a foreign representative, has the honour to be, with the highest (or with high) consideration, "Your Excellency's most obedient, humble Servant."

I say "has," but this is not quite accurate, for with, I cannot but think, a singular lack of humour, the authorities of the Foreign Office some years ago cut the word "humble" out of the forms of signature, while retaining the "obedient": I suppose on the principle which forbids some women to promise to obey but allows them to promise to cherish or honour, and which equally forbids some parlour-maids to say that their mistress is not at home when she really is.

Of course these "endings" are not of immemorial antiquity, but they have been used since the eighteenth century, when they were an ordinary form

even for private letters. I remember, for instance, to have come across a letter from George IV to some friend, in which he subscribed himself as "with great truth," and "Ramillies" shows that Sunderland writing to Marlborough, subscribed himself "with great truth and respect." They, like the notions taught to a Winchester boy, were my first lesson in the Foreign Office, and I hope their use may long continue.

## Chapter VII

### TRANSFORMATION

By 1905 it had become obvious, not so much to the authorities as to the staff of the Foreign Office, that the organisation was absurd. A body of men recruited by the severest form of competitive examination was employed for the first fifteen to twenty years of their career on work of the simplest possible character. This state of things was a subject of much conversation and discussion in the Office, and it was at last brought by Mr. Villiers to the notice of Sir Thomas Sanderson. It was a case of revolution from below, but it is fair to say that, apart from the discrepancy between the character of the staff and the nature of their work, there was a feeling that the questions with which the Foreign Office had to deal had grown so much in number and intricacy that there was work of a better kind waiting to be done if we could be allowed to do it. Sanderson agreed that the matter should be investigated, and appointed a Committee to go round some of the other Public Departments and examine their organisation, with a view to drawing up a scheme under which the routine work could be devolved on second division clerks, and the more important work dealt with in a reasonable way by the first division clerks.

The system which found most favour was, I think, that of the Colonial Office, and the proposals of the Committee were based on it. With Sanderson's concurrence and the approval of the Secretary of State, application was made to the Treasury on 5th March 1905, for authority to make this momentous change.

It was argued that the number of complicated questions before the Office was so vast that, for their proper treatment, it was necessary that memoranda and abstracts should be kept constantly prepared up to date. The men who ought to do this could not at the same time be expected to deal with all the minor details arising out of the voluminous correspondence of the department, and a great burden of unnecessary work was thus thrown on the higher officials, including the Secretary of State. It was stated that several instances of breakdown of health from overwork had recently occurred.

It was, therefore, proposed to deal with the situation by establishing a General Registry, with subsidiary registries, manned by second division clerks under the superintendence of Staff Officers of the same class. They were to take complete charge of the archives, and deal with all such matters as docketing, registration, finding and putting away papers, and with the distribution and management of the print.

It should be explained here that during the period between 1893 and 1905 the number of typists, of whom the first came in 1889, had been gradually increased, and the copying, at least of non-confidential papers, was already done by them. Of the routine work that remained for the first division

clerks the most important part left, after the reforms of 1905, was the ciphering and deciphering of telegrams, which continued to be done in the various departments until, in 1911, a department with the apparently queer title of the "Parliamentary Department" was established to take the work over.

Some years before the reforms of 1905 a Blue Book Department had been instituted. It consisted of two Assistant Clerks and a second division clerk. The theory was good, but the practice less satisfactory. We were to have the print filed and edited in such a way that a Blue book could be produced at very short notice whenever it was called for. This arrangement was in the same order of ideas as the plan for having day-to-day memoranda always ready for the use of the Secretary of State in dealing with any question which might turn up. The drawback was that it was impossible to guess beforehand what new points would be of most importance; while for those affairs which were the subject of a regular issue of Blue books, like the Macedonian reforms, the appearance of any particular papers was seldom really urgent. First Tyrrell and then I were employed in this department, and should have found it dull had we not combined with Blue-book work that of acting as secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, which met at that time in the Foreign Office under the Chairmanship of Mr. Balfour.

This was not, strictly speaking, Foreign Office work at all; the Foreign Secretary was seldom present at the meetings, and the Under Secretary,

I think, never, or only once or twice. That being so, I will only say this : that the most remarkable thing about those meetings was the complete mastery which Mr. Balfour showed, both of his subject and of his colleagues ; a minor point was that the gathering took on somewhat of the air of a family party from the fact that he habitually addressed many of those colleagues by their Christian names.

Sir Arthur Nicolson, in 1911, abolished the Blue Book Department and transferred its routine work to a miscellaneous department which, for that reason, was named "Parliamentary," while its main occupation was that of ciphering and deciphering. I believe the name was to some degree chosen as camouflage. The men in the Department, with the exception of its Head, were all quite juniors, and as a sign of the times, a second division clerk was attached even to this holy of holies.

To return to the reforms of 1905, the arguments on which the appeal to the Treasury is particularly based were the work of Eyre Crowe, a master of administrative detail, but in rank only an Assistant Clerk, who had been one of the Committee of Inquiry. In order to start the new machine properly he was placed temporarily in charge of the Registries, and he became the recognised authority on how things were to be done.

It is interesting to remember that the basis of the demand, as officially put forward, for these reforms was the need for a constant stream of memoranda. We wanted, according to Crowe, facilities for collecting, co-ordinating, selecting,

focusing, and making available for actual use the vast material which was annually accumulating. He wanted to have always ready for reference a clear record of the foreign relations of Great Britain with every foreign country, and of each foreign country with every other. This was in fact precisely what Bland Burges a hundred years earlier had considered so necessary that he had undertaken the work himself.

Crowe urged, and his recommendation was accepted, that every head of a Mission should also be required to produce annually an elaborate report of all that happened in the country of his residence ; that junior diplomatic officers should also send in annual reports on some particular subject ; and that the merits of all alike, when questions of promotion came up, should be judged largely by these works. He assumed that Secretaries of State greatly felt the want of all these memoranda.

Not the least interesting point about this correspondence is that not a single word is said of the change which was to be of the greatest, indeed of incalculable, importance.

Memoranda were written, no doubt ; each department by the sweat of its brow produced an annual memorandum. It never seemed to me that much notice was taken of them, and I was considerably surprised when, a few years ago, I found one of my own printed at full length in one of the volumes of Foreign Office correspondence published after the War. The memoranda called for from heads of Missions have also been religiously provided year by year, and are, I suppose, sometimes useful

for reference, but I am convinced that no promotion has ever been affected by them. Crowe, if he had a fault as an administrator, counted far too little with human nature. The problems which come before the Secretary of State and the Under Secretaries must usually be dealt with day by day in the light of what is happening in the world, and they do not really want continual memoranda to tell them what the problems are about. To take an extreme instance, Sir Edward Grey could not have been expected to consult a memorandum at every moment of the anxious days that preceded the declaration of war. It could not, by any human possibility, have been kept up to date by the most efficient clerk, and that efficient clerk would have been entirely ignorant of much—Cabinet secrets for instance—that was perfectly familiar to Sir Edward.

The running histories, which seemed to Crowe, and perhaps to others, to be the great necessity, were still-born. Memoranda, of course, were called for from time to time to explain some point of difficulty that could be elucidated by reference to the past, or when some ancient question was suddenly resuscitated and had to be explained to authorities to whom it was unfamiliar; but no Secretary of State has time for reading long memoranda in quantities, and Crowe's theory leaves out of reckoning the power of the spoken word; the reliance which every Secretary of State must place on the verbal explanations of the Under Secretary of State.

The great change that was made was that the



clerks in their various degrees now began to write their own suggestions, in the detailed way that was formerly so much deprecated, on each paper that came before them. A Political Department would consist of a Senior Clerk, an Assistant to take his place in his absence, and three or four juniors. The Assistant and each junior had one or more subjects of his own. The inevitable result was that the industrious clerk, and we mostly were industrious, worked up his subjects to the best of his ability, and, if the matter was of any sort of importance, discoursed on it at length; this in spite of occasional attempts to check undue exuberance. The Senior Clerk then added his own observations, occasionally contradicting his junior. The Assistant Under Secretary, if he could think of anything further to say, said it, and if of any importance, sent the paper to the Permanent Under Secretary, who sent it to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State was, therefore, confronted not merely with a despatch from the Ambassador at Constantinople, but with a mass of comment, which may or may not have made it easier for him to come to a decision. This sort of thing was what Lord Salisbury particularly disliked and took pains to avoid: there is a story of his having once received an explanatory memorandum from a junior who was in rather a prominent position, and who liked to set forth every aspect of the question for decision; on the one hand this, on the other hand that, must be said. "Ah!" exclaimed Lord Salisbury, "how well I know those hands." Lord Curzon hated the system and tried, in vain, to alter it.

Still, in theory, all these observations and suggestions were intended to help the Secretary of State, and it is curious that the practice should have led, at least in one instance, to a wholly unjust criticism on Sir Edward Grey. In the volumes of correspondence published after the War not only the despatches to and from the Foreign Office were printed, but the minutes written on them by the various members of the staff. Commenting in *Blackwood* on one of these volumes, Mr. Charles Whibley assumed that Sir Edward Grey was deterred from adding his quota to the minutes by paucity of ideas. Of course, not only the Secretary of State and the Permanent Under Secretary, who had almost equally little time, must generally refrain from written comments, but even the Assistant Under Secretary does not always find it necessary to make any. The Secretary of State has no need to add to what is written for his own enlightenment ; he has only to act.

The complement of the new plan ought to have been a great devolution of responsibility. That was not quite the actual effect, because the initial of the Secretary of State or the Permanent Under Secretary was still required for anything of even potential importance ; the actual effect was that in many cases the highest authorities had to accept and become responsible for the views of their subordinates, or else let the matter stand over till they had time for proper consideration. Moreover, when a subject had been thoroughly threshed out by a junior and then by a senior who knew their subject, it was often natural for the Secretary of

State to accept their views and save an expenditure of time and thought which he could not easily afford.

The vast change, therefore, which the reform really effected was that the "Office," as distinct from the Secretary of State, became a body with a highly influential opinion. To Crowe this must have seemed all to the good. His mind was set upon the perfection of the Foreign Office organisation, and no one was better qualified for the task; but I cannot help thinking that he left out of account the fact that it was the Secretary of State who was to guide British foreign policy in accordance with the views of the Cabinet. The real object of our work was, or ought to have been, to help the Secretary of State to get through his day's work; and it was not to help the present-day historian, or the historian of the future.

A passage from Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's evidence before the Select Committee of 1861 \* is of interest here. In recommending interchange between the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, he said that, for the Civil Service, *esprit de corps* (so much lauded by Hammond) was not a thing to be encouraged: "It tends to make them think of their office more than of their Government, and more than of their country."

It was entirely in the same order of ideas that an attempt, more or less successful, was made about this time to suppress the "private letter" habit in which Secretaries of State, notably Lord Salisbury, had so freely indulged. The extent of Lord Salis-

\* Qn. 1673.

bury's correspondence with Ambassadors at the more important posts may be judged from his *Life*. During his ministry the more important Ambassadors cannot have complained of being out of touch with their chief.

When I was at Constantinople in 1906 and 1907 the Ambassador received some kind of intimation that private letters were discouraged. "There are many things," was his comment to me, "which I can say in private letters which I should not be such a fool as to say in despatches, and I shall continue to write private letters." Ambassadors have perhaps, at times, shown an affection for private letters which is, or was, unreasonable; because after all there is no essential difference between a despatch and a letter, seeing that despatches are not necessarily printed, even when a Blue Book is published. Moreover, it is as easy to qualify one's statements, when their accuracy is doubtful, in a despatch as in a private letter. For really private matters, or gossip, especially now that gossip about Courts is of no great interest, there is scarcely any place in correspondence between the Secretary of State and Ambassadors. On the other hand, private letters bring the Secretary of State into personal contact with our representatives abroad and make them feel, as they ought to feel, that he is the Chief to whom their loyalty is due, rather than to the Institution over which that Chief temporarily presides. Further, the writer feels that his private letters will go straight to his Chief without the commentaries which might, he fears, obscure his meaning or defeat his purpose.

Again, if an Ambassador is to maintain contact he

ought at decent intervals to hear from the Office as well as write to it. The absence of letters from the Office has been a frequent source of unhappiness to our representatives abroad. It is true that, if no negotiation is on hand for which instructions are requisite, a whole series of interesting despatches may call for no official comment : the matter which they contain is swallowed and digested, but they require no special reply and the despatches seem to the writer to have been cast into the sea. Here a few words in the shape of a private letter might be invaluable. Sir Francis Villiers, when Assistant Under Secretary, used by each mail to write a few lines, of the sort that I have indicated, to some of our representatives in Central and South America, for which he was responsible, because "he knew that they liked it." No doubt they did. There is no absolute reason why, if the matter of which private letters used to consist is put into despatches, friendly despatches should not be written in reply ; but that, it seems, goes against the grain of human nature. Of course the private letter practice, like all practices, was sometimes carried to excess. Palmerston carried on negotiations by private letter, ignorance of which was a serious difficulty to his successors. Naturally it was the preliminaries which were thus conducted, and any actual arrangement was eventually recorded, but it was obviously wrong that any Secretary of State should be unaware of proposals made to a foreign Government by his predecessor.

When the Secretary of State went out of office his private correspondence went with him, and the task of arranging and cataloguing it was a severe

one for his personal staff. In the eighteenth century, not only the private correspondence but the précis of despatches made by the précis writer whose special duty it was, went too. Apart from any inconvenience caused to the Minister's successor, there was an increased possibility of secrets falling into improper hands, and these private archives provided what Lord Rosebery would have called an additional hostage to fortune. The real point at issue is that private letters, although possibly of great help to the Secretary of State, make things rather more difficult for the Office and eventually for the historian, and the attempt to suppress them was part of the theory, unavowed no doubt, that it is the Institution and not the Minister which is of real importance. Moreover, human nature being what it is, people simply will not put into despatches, or even minutes, their innermost thoughts, if there is a possibility, as according to the latest practice there now is, of seeing them all published within a very few years. The attempt to make everything public and available will either dry up some sources of information or drive that information farther underground.

Another change which grew out of the reforms was the practice of having "experts" in the various political departments. I have heard in former days surprise expressed that there was actually in, say, the China Department, no one who knew China at first hand. As I have shown, their absence did not much matter, because the Secretary of State was in direct personal touch with the man on the spot. When we all began to give our various opinions on

our particular subjects, and as exchanges between the two branches of the Service became more and more frequent, it was natural that in each Department should be found one or more men who knew some of the countries with which the Department dealt, and that they should become recognised experts. The danger of that arrangement was that, being at the side of the Secretary of State, they might speak with as loud a voice as the man on the spot, if not louder, even though their knowledge of the country in question were some years old.

I have put the darker side of the case for the reforms first, but there is also a very bright side. I should say that their most valuable effect has been to produce a larger supply of acute brains at the top of the Office, because acuteness is the natural result of twenty years of hard thinking, and stagnation is the natural result of twenty years of routine work; there is consequently a larger field of selection for the highest posts. We have seen in a previous chapter the fear expressed that there would be no one fit to succeed Edmund Hammond, because no one had been trained to follow in his footsteps. We have seen also that Hammond himself, able and industrious as he was accounted, was not very brilliant. It is true that competitive examination made little difference, because the material before and after its institution was much the same, and though the examination became stiffer and stiffer, the real education of the men, especially on Hammond's theory that education begins after a man is twenty-one, remained constant. There were, of course, exceptions, like Sanderson,

whose acuteness was proof against any process of blunting.

Another feature of the post-reform period is that the men in the Departments took a lively interest not only in the biggest subjects with which the Secretary of State might deal, but in a great number of smaller subjects which, if they all had to await the directions, to use the old phrase, of the Secretary of State, would not be dealt with at all, or, at least, not on their merits. It was consequently an important result of the reforms that a great number of subjects were carefully studied, and the sum of those studies constituted a body of permanent knowledge, at the service of the Secretary of State and those in authority under him, in the light of which there was a much better chance than formerly existed of right decision being taken.

Another great consequence, though not an essential one, of the reforms was that the Office became much more businesslike in its general habits. We certainly did get things done before, sometimes I think quicker than they could be done by the new machine, but in a general way business habits were needed. The inspiration for this particular change came from Sir Charles Hardinge, who became Under Secretary on 1st February 1906, and put into force the changes planned under his predecessor. He made us, for instance, come punctually at eleven, and encouraged us to leave at six, if there was no absolute necessity to stay later. He insisted on accuracy and punctuality and tidiness, and all such excellent qualities. He took a valuable interest in the details of office admini-



stration. He felt himself, very properly, to be responsible for the good of the Diplomatic Service, of which, except for a short period of service as Assistant Under Secretary, he had been a lifelong member, as well as of the Foreign Office. As he was the first Ambassador to become Permanent Under Secretary, at any rate since Addington, so he was the first, I conceive, to hold a just balance between the two Services. I cannot quote in a book the exact language which he once used to me about this matter, but the dictum which remained in my mind was that neither Service should be made, let us say, a refuse receptacle for the other.

I believe that the activity of mind which he inspired was one of the most valuable results of the change of system.

In one respect he was the reverse of his predecessor. He was never, I believe, unready to offer an opinion. When he went to India a high official of the India Office said of the Foreign Office, "They all tell me he has courage." I say this, in spite of any apparent impropriety of discussing the character of living persons, because my object is to emphasise the importance of the change from a state of things in which the Permanent Head of the Office scarcely thought it decent to express a personal opinion on big questions.

Another result of the changes was to unloose a new stream of potential dissatisfaction. The second division clerks who, when we first took to them, were described as lower division clerks, soon acquired much the same familiarity with their subjects as we had previously had. They saw all the papers,

read them carefully in order to give a correct description of them on the dockets and in the registers, and, if they wished to be efficient, learned their subjects in such a way as to be able to produce the correct papers at the correct moment; but they did not express opinions, except perhaps an occasional verbal one. After a few years of this work, their occupation naturally tended to become monotonous, and they were bound to wish for release in favour of the higher class of work for which they considered that their training had made them competent. I have already pointed out that they were recruited by means of a competitive examination of relatively great simplicity, and it would have stultified our system of recruiting to say that their training in routine matters placed them on an equality with the new recruit who was the finished product of the university. Moreover if the Office wishes to attract that finished product it must maintain an adequate number of annual vacancies and a reasonable rapidity of promotion. In so small a Service every vacancy that is filled otherwise than from the normal source has a discouraging effect. At the same time, there were obviously good brains among the second division clerks, and their disposal was a serious problem. After the War we made a great effort to provide outlets by creating new posts in the Office, half way between first and second division, carrying a fair salary: I take pride, for instance, in having invented technical assistants, of whom there are now several. We also successfully drafted some of the second division into the Consular Service and others into a greatly improved archivist service for the Embassies and

Legations. Now I believe the problem has been momentarily solved by inventing a new class of clerk recruited by a still simpler examination and presumably with more modest claims. This development is outside my era. One thing I hope I am right in saying: I believe that the question of friendly relations between the diplomatic establishment and the second division was happily solved; the former being always determined to minimise rather than emphasise any supposed differences of standing.

A point which I have not expressly dealt with is the nature of the minutes written on the despatches and letters received at the Foreign Office. It is important for historians to remember that these are, or were, observations destined very often to be discussed orally with a higher authority, liable to oral correction which may not appear on paper, sometimes provoking disagreement which was only casually expressed. They were not of the nature of State papers or other full dress documents. Lately it has become the practice to publish them wholesale, and, as in the case of Sir Edward Grey which I have quoted, they may, if not taken at their proper value, lead to misapprehensions. The difference is like that which one sees between a diary written for publication and one written for the diarist's own use. Very often minutes have to be written in a great hurry, especially in the case of telegrams during a crisis. When the Secretary of State is perhaps only available at the Office for a short time, when he is going to have an interview with a foreign representative or going to the Cabinet, he cannot be expected to wait while his subordinates are going deeply into

the subject at issue ; in such a case the minutes might easily appear inadequate.

The pressure on the Secretary of State was in no way lessened by the reforms because the increase of work kept pace with them ; the difference was that if absolutely every question had continued to be referred to him, twenty-four hours would not have made a long enough day ; as it is they sometimes do. Lord Grey's *Twenty-five Years*, Lord Newton's *Life of Lord Lansdowne*, and Lord Zetland's *Life of Lord Curzon* give an impressive picture of the Secretary of State's working days. Nor did the reforms lessen the burden thrown on the other higher officials. Lord Curzon liked to see a great many papers. I was once in charge of the Office under him for a few weeks and I told him that I just had time to glance at the contents of the boxes which reached me in the evening and make up my mind as to what I should send on to him, with only the rarest observations of my own. He was not surprised. We sent him the boxes at eight or nine—that was in 1919 ; and he worked at them, I believe, from about ten or eleven till two or three in the morning. Up to that time, the period within my own knowledge, all the Under Secretaries had habitually to work at home, and many of their subordinates as well when their special departments were busy ; their work is perhaps a little easier when the Secretary of State spends much time in the Office. Lord Salisbury worked at home, and messages had to be despatched in good time to catch the Hatfield train, which meant a little extra pressure ; his holidays were often spent in France, at Dieppe, and Beaulieu, and messengers had to follow him there.

Lord Landsdowne was, I think, constantly at the Office, and so was Sir Edward Grey. Lord Curzon was more variable. Under the reformed régime the attendance of the Secretary of State is, of course, more important because the "Office" is more important, and the aloofness of Lord Salisbury is not likely to be imitated in the future.

## Chapter VIII

### THE WAR

THE Great War found the Foreign Office to this extent prepared that we were sufficiently well used to sudden rushes of work, and to being called upon for special efforts, not to be altogether swamped. The first difficulty in any great crisis in the Office is to deal with the flood of telegrams which have to be ciphered and deciphered : this is work which must be done, and must be done at once ; moreover, at such moments, telegrams are not only much more numerous but much longer than usual ; communications to be made to this or that Government, lengthy arguments by this or that Government in favour of some particular course of action, mean a tremendous burden of work for the Office and the Embassies.

In normal times the telegrams which arrived after office hours were dealt with by the Resident Clerk on duty. At an ordinary time of crisis the Resident Clerks were helped by benevolent juniors, whose benevolence was of the same character as that of the taxpayers who paid a "benevolence" to the Treasury in Stuart days. In July and August 1914 it soon became evident that no arrangement of this sort would suffice and the department responsible for ciphering and deciphering was largely

augmented, and divided into three shifts, so that the work could be carried on continuously. Juniors, diplomatic or consular, returning from enemy countries, provided an immediate increase of staff. At a later period of the War the number of telegrams fell off, negotiations being less necessary as more and more of the neutrals became allies; two shifts from 8 to 4 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to midnight were thus enough. Eight hours was as much as any eyes could stand at a time of this sort of work. A minor difficulty was that of sending home the typists who worked for the Cipher Department till midnight. Trams and omnibuses had sometimes stopped, and those who lived in the suburbs had to be sent home by car. The distribution of the telegrams to Ministers in other offices, such as the Admiralty and War Office, was in itself a big business, as was the registering, because it was essential that they should be seen by the highest authorities at once and acted on without delay. Occasionally one telegram by itself may tell the Secretary of State what he wants to know, but more often he must, for instance, see what Washington has to say as well as Paris, and must be reminded perhaps of particular circumstances which depend on these messages. After a time telegrams came so thick and fast that a large number had to be delayed, and various distinctions had to be invented for marking various degrees of urgency. So far as I can recollect no serious difficulty arose from any delay over telegrams during the whole period of the War. There was, however, a good deal of complaint at times because the departments did not receive papers

rapidly enough from the registries: this could only have been obviated by some complete change of system; and, rightly or wrongly, we decided that it was safer not to change horses while crossing the stream. Almost immediately after the War the registry system was changed to something more modern.

The first extra piece of duty that was thrown upon us mingled comedy with tragedy. Owing to some mistake, which arose because some one had forgotten the difference between Berlin and London time, a certain proclamation had at the last moment to be altered by hand in time for issue as soon as war was declared. Accordingly a large party of us were gathered after dinner on the 4th August in a big room on the ground floor and told, like naughty boys, write out a thousand times the words, "His Majesty, mindful that a state of war exists between this country and Germany." While we were engaged on this task some one who had just seen Mr. Churchill came in with the cheering but delusive news that the *Breslau* and the *Goeben* were as good as caught. About the same time a junior member of the staff was sent to take Prince Lichnowsky his passports: on the way back he met the reporters but evaded speech with them. Next day he was not very much pleased to read a description of the Ambassador, looking pale and worn, but still youthful, as he was seen coming to the Foreign Office at midnight to fetch his passports.

Immediately upon the outbreak of war a special War Department was constituted. The Western Department, which ordinarily dealt with the affairs of Western Europe, formed the nucleus. They



were reinforced by men from other departments or from the enemy countries when they came home, and by men who happened to be on leave and could not at once get back to their posts : among them Sir Cecil Spring Rice, then Ambassador at Washington, who gaily took on the work of a junior.

The Head of the War Department was Eyre Crowe, who had been the Assistant Under Secretary superintending the Western Department. Second to him was George Clerk, who had been head of the Eastern Department. Clerk for a considerable time was on constant duty, sleeping for one night at any rate in his office room.

I feel that I ought to mention, almost as part of the Foreign Office organisation at this time, Monsieur Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador. His share in the history of those days has often been described : he was certainly one of the most familiar sights of the Office passages, and was received with constant sympathy by Sir Arthur Nicolson, the Permanent Under Secretary.

Nicolson, as we all knew, and as is related in his *Life*, by his son, had come to the Foreign Office from St. Petersburg in 1910 with much reluctance, and only because he felt it to be his duty. I do not think he ever liked the work, least of all the administrative work. He had begun life as a Foreign Office clerk, but had been very soon transferred to diplomacy, and during thirty-six years had never returned to work there. The severer critics declared that he put A. N. on most of the papers that reached him without even undoing the tape which fastened them together. Of anything that was not more

or less high politics this may have been nearly true. Nor did he make the acquaintance of many of the staff, although he cherished the belief that they did not realise this. Once when I was walking home with him we met a colleague who greeted us, and who was greeted by Nicolson with equal cordiality. When we had passed on he asked who the man was, adding quite erroneously, "This often happens, but they never find out that I do not know them."

Sir Arthur Nicolson was nevertheless a delightful person and was universally regarded with affection. At the same time he was quite capable both of dignity and severity. Sir Thomas Sanderson, really a most kind-hearted man, was apt at times to lose his temper and could make himself disagreeable, but I should say that Nicolson could, if he wished, be much sterner than Sanderson. Moreover, even where he did not himself go into details, he exercised an efficient general control.

Nicolson had made up his mind very definitely about the necessity for England to enter the War; but there is a curious passage in the *Life* to the effect that he disliked many of the measures which the carrying on of war entailed, and avoided, if possible, dealing with them. This was perhaps a flaw in his official character, for he should have foreseen, or at least accepted, the consequences of the policy which he himself advocated.

In the Chief Clerk's Department, which was my own, one of our first difficulties was to provide cash for Messengers, both those who had to undertake the usual journeys, and others who had missions to make certain purchases in France. In that

country no one would take anything but gold; an inconvenient characteristic not confined to that period; consequently the unfortunate Messengers had to take with them sacks of sovereigns, which added greatly to their cares. The bags in which despatches were sent abroad were also a difficulty, for it was occasionally necessary to throw them overboard, and they proved uncommonly averse from sinking. We tried iron weights, but they were cumbersome and the bags still floated; eventually we had the bags pierced with numerous eyelets.

The organisation of Messengers' journeys was in itself an anxiety; devious routes had to be devised: a large proportion of them entailed the passage of the North Sea, but fortunately we had no casualties. Once or twice bags were thrown overboard—I think in the Mediterranean—and captured by the enemy. Some of these Messenger journeys must have made the nearest approach to the thrilling adventures on which Foreign Office clerks and Diplomatic Secretaries so often engaged in romantic novels.

One of our troubles in the Chief Clerk's Department was the violent fluctuation in exchange, which at times brought one or other Mission into a position of the greatest difficulty. The Treasury were benevolent but, perhaps naturally, were anxious to find some scheme which would apply equally to conditions all over the world. Fortunately, we persuaded them to abandon hope of effecting this uniformity, for while conditions in Mexico were under discussion our men in Norway starved. We had to meet each case as it arose to the best of our ability. We also persuaded them

to divide the remuneration of heads of Missions between salary and entertainment allowance, for as income-tax went up, the purpose for which the higher salaries had been fixed was defeated.

The organisation of the War Department under Crowe lasted a very short time; then Sir Arthur Nicolson took direct charge, still with Clerk as second, and Crowe was made Head of a new department which was to deal with matters concerning trade and commerce as affected by the War. It was a department of the normal size, and was the humble beginning of the vast Contraband Department which grew into the Ministry of Blockade, and played such an important part in the winning of the War.

The War Department itself became in course of time of less importance, when the preliminary negotiations were over, and discussions with the allied Governments were largely carried on at meetings of Ministers.

Before the War was a year old, two material difficulties had come to be of recurrent importance from the point of view of organisation: space and additional staff. Fortunately, there were a good many empty rooms of one sort and another. In particular there were the three vast reception-rooms, which became the home of the Contraband Department; the banquet-room being occupied by an army of ladies under the sway of a very capable superintendent. Though capable she was not without feminine weakness, for a male clerk, going late in the evening to the ladies' room, in hope of finding some one still there, did in fact find the

ady superintendent, but alone, standing on a chair in the middle of that vast, empty space. "What are you doing?" he asked. "Oh, Mr. A., there is a mouse in the room!" Some of the bigger rooms were divided into two, high authorities being content with half of their former magnificence. The Resident Clerks had to give up their sitting-rooms, and finally even went up to the attics. Library storerooms were brought into use. An enormous room in the tower which had been devoted to maps was made into a five-room apartment for the head office-keeper and his family; this was a piece of architecture of which I was very proud.

One room had to be made as a place of refuge for the Prime Minister. It was at the base of the tower near the Park door, and we were assured that it was the safest place in London, so that we could not but surrender it. During air raids all the ladies of the staff were sent down to the big passage leading past the door of the Prime Minister's refuge to the Park door. On one occasion I asked whether they had all gone down, and was told that they were quite calm and happy, singing—singing, I believe, *Adeste Fideles* in the English version, which much annoyed a Roman Catholic colleague. But presently a change had come about. The Prime Minister had come hurriedly in at the Park door, and gone so quickly to his room that some of the ladies had jumped to the conclusion that something fearful had happened, and two of them had fainted. Next morning I read in the newspaper that the ladies had been in a state of great terror

and excitement, but the Prime Minister coming in at that moment had, by his calm behaviour, speedily soothed them.

Actually, I suppose, he was intent upon some piece of work, and never noticed the ladies.

At the top of the building we arranged quarters for an officer of the R.N.R. and some naval ratings, who were in charge of an anti aircraft gun. This caused some difficulty. The officer objected that the chairs in his room had not been covered with chintz, and one of the naval ratings came in drunk, chased an office-keeper, who was eating his dinner, round and round the room and finally ate the poor man's dinner himself. I have spoken of an anti-aircraft gun because I certainly believe that is what it was ; but I have been so often told that anti-aircraft guns in London were mostly imaginary, that I should be prepared to call it a searchlight.

The task of engaging extra staff, male and female, fell to my Department. The men had to be unfit for military service, trustworthy, and as competent as might be. A number of them proved to be exceedingly able, and nearly all of them did well. There was some divergence of opinion as to releasing any of our own men for military service. Crowe, for whom the Office came very much first, would have liked to keep every one. Others were inclined to think that we should let the younger men go ; but there was a special difficulty in this, because the second division clerks had come in at about the age of eighteen, whereas the diplomatic clerks had come in at twenty-two to twenty-five, so that to take all the youngest men first meant to take all second and

no first division men. On the other hand, the second division men were more easily replaced by women. It was a considerable time before it was arranged to let any one go, but in the end a certain number of both categories were released, though many more second division than first. Of the second division clerks several died gallantly. Charles Lister, of the Diplomatic Service, who was also killed, had been working in the Foreign Office a few years earlier.

In addition to the men whom we took in from outside we engaged gradually a great number of women. Of these many were naturally amateurs; some had difficulty, according to their male colleagues, in acquiring habits of precision, and in the registries were said to be apt to think one number on a paper as good as another. Others were hard to persuade that, once engaged, they could not go off at once when their mothers and aunts and children were sick or otherwise in need of their help. Considerable difference of opinion existed in the Government offices and elsewhere as to the working power of women as compared with that of men. Opinions varied between five women to two men and three women to two men; I think we should, diplomatically, have said four women to two men. Of course we were not dealing with highly trained women, and apart from training there was the question of long hours. During this time we broke loose in the matter of shorthand typists. The Contraband Department was provided with large numbers, and heads of small sections dictated their letters as a matter of course, whereas before the War it was still

the Secretary of State alone, or occasionally the Permanent Under Secretary, who used a shorthand writer.

Neither among men or women was there any instance of anybody in the nature of a spy finding his or her way into the office, as any novelist would certainly have expected. One woman was found to have doubtful connexions, and had to leave.

The Contraband Department, although still practically part of the Foreign Office, soon became in theory separate, being placed under the Ministry of Blockade. Lord Robert Cecil was both political Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and, from February 1916, Minister of Blockade, thus leaving Sir Edward Grey free from all except the most important trade questions.

I say that the Contraband Department was separate in theory, because it was managed entirely by Foreign Office officials, except that, under Lord Robert Cecil, there was from the end of 1916 a Parliamentary Under Secretary in the person of Mr. Leverton Harris. The work of organisation was mainly done by Alwyn Parker, who was Head of the Department in its early history, and remained Head while it was divided into seven or eight sections, each the size of an ordinary Foreign Office Department. The principal sections dealt each with some important commodity, such as coal, cotton, or wool, or with particular neutral countries, which had to be rationed.

Crowe acted throughout as Permanent Under Secretary of the Department, but, in July 1918, Lord Robert Cecil became Assistant Secretary of



State, and was succeeded in the Ministry of Blockade by Sir L. Worthington Evans.

The manning of all these sections was, naturally, a matter for anxious thought. It was generally possible to find a Foreign Office clerk or a diplomatist to act as head of the section. Most of the rest were temporary men, who had had to leave the active list of the Army for various reasons, or who had been rejected for military service. I remember with horror the list of maladies which from time to time was filled up to satisfy the authorities that the excuse was genuine; it was a matter for wonder that some of the men could stand the strain. Parker was one of the far-seeing people who made the very best of all the material offered to him, while there were some of the older men who could not conceive of any good coming from a clerk who was not in the regular service, any more than some old officers could recognise good in a temporary soldier. By 1918 there were fifty-two men in the Department besides women assistants: they included business men, ex-Indian civilians, ex-diplomats, and unfit young men in need of a war job. They were a very able set of men, who stuck nobly to their work, and the majority of them received only a nominal salary of £200 a year to start with, a few rising to £300 or £400 as time went on.

The work of the Contraband Department included such negotiations with foreign Governments, particularly neutrals, as were calculated to smooth over their objections to our contraband policy. The Department was the object of constant attack from abroad for being too severe, from at home for

being too mild. Arm-chair critics, and not only arm-chair but naval critics, recked nothing of the possibility of some neutral country coming into the War against us; and some newspapers were quite unwilling to listen to explanations, although the Prime Minister made a considerable effort to enlighten them. The attitude of the United States was the most serious problem of all, as is by now, presumably, obvious to every one; but that of Sweden was also of great importance. I remember hearing that both Lord Kitchener and the Ministry of Munitions had at different times declared that Sweden's definite hostility would be absolutely fatal, both because certain essential commodities could only be obtained from her, and because she commanded our communications with Russia. General Alexieff also declared that if Sweden joined Germany, Russia would be driven to make peace at once. It was therefore necessary to allow Sweden certain imports, in spite of the groans of the critics. Apart from the United States and, of course, Sweden, all the neutrals, some more and some less favourable to our cause, had to be persuaded to accept the rations which we considered reasonable.

The burden of the principal negotiations fell on Lord Robert Cecil and Sir Eyre Crowe.

A great deal of work, too, was involved in the necessary discussions with manufacturers and traders of all kinds in this country. One result of this constant contact with business men was that the reputation for ability and industry of Foreign Office clerks, who would normally have been assumed in

such circles to be butterflies, soared to remarkable heights, and offers of employment poured in towards the end of the War and immediately afterwards. One of the most distinguished children of this alliance between the Foreign Office and Business was the Federation of British Industries, which was organised for the founders by Foreign Office clerks.

Co-ordination between the Ministry of Blockade and the Admiralty and Board of Trade was secured by the constitution, on Sir Edward Grey's initiative, of the Contraband Committee under the Chairmanship, first, of Lord Cave (afterwards Lord Chancellor), and then of Sir Ernest Pollock (now Lord Hanworth).

I have speciall mentioned the critics of the Contraband Department, but the Foreign Office generally was the object of as much attack as if most of the nations of the world had come into the War against us instead of on our side. If, on the other hand, there is truth in the view, which some people hold, that the blockade won the War, then the Foreign Office must take a considerable share of the credit, for the blockade was managed mainly by the Foreign Office, of which the Ministry of Blockade was really a part.

Presently the Contraband Department began to have offshoots: the Foreign Trade Department, which occupied Stafford House, with a Finance Section which afterwards migrated to Bridgewater House; the War Trade Intelligence Department, which lived in a building in the St. James's Park Lake; the War Trade Statistical Department, and the Restriction of Enemy Supplies Department.

The Foreign Trade Department achieved a

measure of independence, and the Controller wrote letters in his own name and not by direction of the Secretary of State or the Minister of Blockade. It was first managed by Mr. Worthington Evans, the future Cabinet Minister, then by Sir Ernest Pollock, now Lord Hanworth; and Mr. Will Spens, now Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, was first Private Secretary and then Secretary.

The following account of its work has kindly been contributed by Lord Hanworth :

THE FOREIGN TRADE DEPARTMENT OF THE  
FOREIGN OFFICE

*By the Right Hon. LORD HANWORTH, K.B.E.,*  
Master of the Rolls

At the outbreak of War there were no plans for a blockade of Germany, still less one which would affect ports of neutral countries contiguous to Germany. It was not until March of 1915 that a Contraband Committee was established for the purpose of taking steps to prevent goods reaching Germany. Even then the full implication of the doctrine of continuous voyage and the possibility of its application to the blockade of ports in Holland and Belgium had not been realised.

In the autumn of 1915 it was seen that it was essential to cut the arteries which fed Germany indirectly through other countries, if her supplies were to be effectively diminished. It was then realised that to cut off merchandise, which was destined for the Port of Hamburg, only stimulated

the circulation to the heart of the enemy country through other channels. Consequently it was determined to cut the supply at its earliest exit.

Modern business methods are not confined within the limits of one country. Goods are not produced and supplied, despatched, and paid for—as they may be when ordered at a London store, delivered by a car belonging to the transit department of that store, and paid for by a customer's cheque which can be cashed at a bank on the opposite side of the street. Goods that would be likely to penetrate to Germany might be manufactured in the United States of America, carried across the seas in British bottoms, and paid for by credit established by Germany in New York *via* pesetas at Madrid, gulden in Holland, and kroner in Sweden, which finally become dollars in New York.

Sir Laming Worthington Evans thought out a system which would interfere with this chain of causation, and on the 23rd December 1915, an Act received the Royal Assent designed to effect this object. Its title reveals its purpose: "An Act to provide for the Extension of the Restrictions relating to Trading with the Enemy to Persons to whom, though not resident or carrying on Business in Enemy Territory, it is by reason of their Enemy Nationality or Enemy Association expedient to extend such Restriction."

This Act applied to British nationals wherever resident, and restricted them from engaging in business with persons of enemy nationality or enemy association. To put it quite shortly, it

meant this, that no British merchant in foreign lands could buy from, or sell to, a person who was of enemy nationality or association. No British bank could finance, and no British shipowner could carry the goods of, such a person.

In order to make clear who were the persons who fulfilled the characteristics of enemy nationality, or enemy association, a list was compiled for each country, afterwards known as "The Black List," and was transmitted to our Embassies and Legations, with instructions to notify British nationals of the terms of the Act and the names of the persons who were, so to speak, put out of bounds.

Some countries resented this procedure. They claimed that its action meddled with their domestic affairs and thereby interfered with their sovereignty. The reply to this complaint was simple and quite in accordance with International Law and courtesy: "We do not interfere in your domestic affairs, but we call upon our own nationals to conform in their behaviour to certain rules."

Those who were placed upon "The Black List" resented it deeply. It was an effective blow to business. In fact in the East, where German traders were found in numbers, it stopped business, and the "godowns" of German traders were rendered empty. In South America the coffee trade of Brazil was largely in the hands of enemy traders. It affected the nitrate trade of Chile, and the sugar from Peru, and was a serious blow to the Argentine where German penetration had been effective. It is needless to add that there were many communications—backwards and forwards—

as to who ought to be put on to, or taken off, the Statutory List, answers made to the protests, and responses to the additional information as to further names to be added. Ambassadors and Ministers, or their representatives, had to be interviewed.

The organisation of the Department was cleverly built up, on the lines of a department separately established, by Sir Laming Worthington Evans, and when he became Minister of Blockade his successor was the writer, who remained Controller of the Department until the end of the war. Sir Adam Block was in charge of a subsidiary, but very important, department which traced through the telegrams and wireless communications the attempts to establish through the banks credits with enemy traders.

One bank in Denmark was much astonished to find that it was in danger of being put upon the Statutory List because of its dealings in exchange. Its representative came to London and was shown how it was used as a link in establishing German credits in New York. To be put on the Statutory List and cut off all facilities with London was too great a risk for it to take, and it agreed to stop its dealings in exchange.

During the course of the War the Foreign Office was anxious to obtain reliable information as to the effect of the blockade upon Germany, and month by month such information as trickled through was compiled in a report made by Max Muller. To the end of the War, however, this information remained imperfect and not convincing. The writer of these lines was much interested when

travelling from Leipzig to Bentheim, with a representative of the German Foreign Office, to learn from his lips that "what broke Germany down was that effective and pitiless blockade of yours."

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The Foreign Office, as well as the Ministry of Blockade, had its offshoots. The Passport Department became almost a separate office; so did the Prisoners of War Department under Lord Newton. Then there was a Historical Section under Mr. George Prothero, which produced a wonderful series of manuals on all the countries of the world for the education of the members of the Peace Conference. Within the Office itself there was a department of Political Intelligence, and a News Department for communication with the Press and propaganda work generally.\* These last three were manned partly from outside the office, but Sir William Tyrrell superintended the work. He was greatly helped by Mr. Headlam-Morley, who afterwards became Historical Adviser to the Foreign Office, an office which recently died with him. The News Department was under Montgomery of the Foreign Office. There was also a Prize Court Department, and a Foreign Claims Office, managed by Mr. Justice Peterson and Mr. Malcolm Macnaghten: the names of both of these two Departments explain themselves.

The Department of Political Intelligence brought together a brilliant collection of students and writers, including Mr. Edwyn Bevan, Mr. Namier,

\* For a fuller account of the News Department, and of Foreign Office relations with the Press generally, see Chapter XIII.



Mr. Toynbee, Mr. John Bailey, and others. The *Cambridge History* says that as a body they were not perhaps so far from realising that ideal which one of the witnesses before the Civil Service Commission of 1914 had tried to express by saying that the Foreign Office ought to be a mirror of the nation. Its aim, according to the same authority, was to supply the want of information from countries when diplomatic representation was no longer possible. The work which they did was admirable, but it is doubtful whether it could have been possible to carry it on in peace time. Somewhat the same effect is produced by the Institute of International Affairs, and from one source or another independent views about the affairs of this or that country are always available for the study of the Secretary of State, or his subordinates, in their leisure moments. I believe that the difference between theory and practice is that the great problems of the moment with which the Minister himself must deal are produced in conditions which arise quite suddenly or at least are not in the historical sequence which students would like to see.

One interesting duty of the News Department was to arrange for visits to the Front by foreigners of all kinds, to whom it was desired to show things as they really were. Each party spent three or four days at the Château des Visiteurs, near G.H.Q., and with some one from the Foreign Office in attendance was taken about from one point of interest to another, Ypres being, I think, always included. My own charges were an American pacifist and a Russian socialist, who found an enormous

amount of matter for conversation, even if their views on the War were not materially altered. Accompanied by a temporary officer, who in civil life was, I believe a musical composer, we visited Ypres and Albert, Courcellette, Pozières, Loupart Wood, and various army hospitals and other places, and in one of the hospitals an accidental conversation with a doctor did certainly enlighten the American about German prisons. This visit was, I presume, typical of a great number of such visits, which did, I believe, satisfy an important demand on the part of potential friends of the allied cause.

I have mentioned already the growth of the Passport Department. This was phenomenal. On the 4th of August the staff consisted of one second division clerk and a doorkeeper, occupying two small rooms near a back entrance. Even with such assistance as could hastily be given this small staff was rapidly swamped, and the public doubtless had to put up with a great deal of inconvenience. Presently we had huts built in the courtyard; but they, too, proved too small and the offices were erected in the Lake, the staff ultimately comprising a dozen clerks with a large number of assistants male and female. The Department was very well managed, and after the inevitable difficulties of the first rush gave great satisfaction to its clients.

I believe that somewhere a book was compiled recording everything that was done in the various Government offices on the outbreak of War, so that time and anxiety should be saved when the next war broke out. We all hope there may be no other war; but if unfortunately there is, I cannot but

feel anxious lest these records may prove to be labour lost. The circumstances may not inconceivably be entirely different. In any case, it is clear that the Foreign Office can have no reserve of space or staff waiting for employment.

During the whole of the War the Foreign Office organisation was frequently investigated by various Commissions and Committees, but they were less important than the Royal Commission on the Civil Service under the chairmanship of Lord Macdonell, which had been appointed before the War, although it only reported in December 1914. I believe that Lord Macdonell was considered a good chairman, but he certainly had the fault, common in such cases, of bullying witnesses who did not give the answers that he wished and expected. This practice may sometimes elicit the truth from reluctant lips, but at others it is apt to elicit untruth from a timid witness.

The most important changes recommended by the Commission, and in the main accepted by the Secretary of State, were the amalgamation of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service and the abolition of any property qualification for the latter. Applications for permission to compete for the Service were to be made direct to the Civil Service Commission, a change which made, as things by then were, almost no difference except in theory. Suitable entertainment and living allowances were to be made to those serving abroad, calculated to enable them to hold their own in the society of the place where they might be living. Several Commissioners objected to the amalgamation proposals, and one

body, including Mr. Clynes and some of his more advanced colleagues, was anxious about the selection of a wider variety of types for the service, although every one was in favour of selection of some kind.

In the body of the report reference was made to the number of Etonians in the Service; upon which Sir Samuel Hoare made, in his reservation, the true comment that what was wanted was to produce competent diplomats, not to provide a career for young men, and he saw no reason (Harrovian though he was) to suppose that those then being produced were not competent. I cannot help thinking that this idea of Etonian influence, which is also mentioned in the *Cambridge History*, has been run much too closely. It is perfectly true that there have been, and are to-day, a great many Etonians among the Ambassadors and Ministers, but there are great many Etonians in high places in most departments of public life. Two or three years ago a dinner was given at the Mansion House to celebrate the fact that the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker, and the Lord Mayor were Etonians, not to mention the Governor of the Bank and the editor of *The Times*. At that moment I believe that all the Governors-General were Etonians. There were several Etonian Ministers in the Labour Government, though not in the Cabinet. In my view, the truth is that Eton turns out, not a great quantity of boys of one type, as is widely assumed, but a great quantity of types with a common factor of capability; this is the natural result of her educational methods, and the Diplomatic Service

was a natural outlet for capable boys who were not anxious to make money.

Since the War the proportion of Etonians coming into the Foreign Office has been smaller, but this is largely because a much greater number of Etonians go into business than formerly.

The abolition of the property qualification for the Diplomatic Service was slower in its effect than might be expected. It had never been very rigid, and no proof was required that a candidate had the £400 a year, which, as he was given to understand, was considered necessary. Nevertheless, even after the change, the feeling persisted among possible candidates that, whatever might be said, private means were almost essential. Possibly also there still remained the old idea that existence in the Diplomatic Service was that of a social butterfly, in which men without a taste for society would be out of place. The butterfly idea was alien to those which exist about civil servants, saying nothing of ten to four, hot-tempered colonels and retired Indian civilians, and other classes of men which exist mainly in the imagination of journalists and novelists of the popular variety. At the same time diplomats ought obviously, if they are to make a success of their profession, to be able to make friends with any sort or kind of people who may be a useful source of knowledge, not by any means necessarily secret, about their country. To many Englishmen even this is difficult when it comes to dealing with foreigners, and doubtless life in a big public school, particularly so big a one as Eton, and in a university, makes it seem easier.

Among the reforms calculated to enable men without private means to live in a reasonable style, were the grant of full travelling allowances, to cover the cost of moving their furniture, and of rent allowances which would make it possible for them to live near their chief. Before this, outfit allowances were given to Ambassadors, Ministers, and Secretaries of Embassy on appointment, which rarely covered their outlay, but the unfortunate Secretary transferred, say from Peking to Lisbon, received indeed his own fare in full, but only a small proportion of the fares of his family, and had to transport his household goods at his own expense. Many members of the Service had to spend their capital, hoping, probably in vain, to make the loss good when they reached the higher posts. The rent scheme was also a great boon, for in every capital the Embassy or Legation was in the best part of the town, and to rent a house or apartment anywhere near it involved expenses quite out of proportion to the income of many of the Secretaries. They could not live far away, especially in the busier posts, as they might be required at any time for ciphering and deciphering telegrams, and as they were expected to attend official parties; and the busiest posts were usually the bigger capitals where rents were most likely to be expensive. One difficulty to be surmounted in regard to rents was the natural desire of the Treasury to fix limits, but we succeeded in persuading them that it must be left to the Head of the Mission to decide what rent was reasonable. The regulations were devised to meet all kinds of contingencies; Secretaries who did

not want to move their furniture were allowed to charge for storage, and provision was made for hotel expenses while looking for a house, often a serious item, and for necessary fittings to the house when taken. In fact, the regulations were based on the assumption that the Secretary would have no private means at all. There had been some authorities who wished to give Foreign Office clerks the same privileges as regards living allowances as diplomats, on the ground that it was desirable for them to go into society and to entertain their foreign colleagues on some small scale. It was, however, eventually agreed that differentiation of this sort between clerks in the Foreign Office and those in other Government offices was impracticable, Ambassadors and Ministers also benefited by these changes, but in a somewhat less degree. It was decided that their houses should be fully furnished, and not only the reception rooms, as had previously been the case. Their outfit allowances had varied from £315 at Dresden to £4000 at Paris: the next highest being £2700 at Constantinople. These were now cut down to a few hundred pounds most, and the expenses of their journeys on taking up and leaving their posts were paid in full. Another rule which had proved inconvenient was that when the Head of the Mission was on leave he had to hand over part of his salary—£6 a day at Paris, £4 a day at Rome, and so on—to the *Chargé d’Affaires*. The assumption was that he had no expenses of entertaining, and this contribution eked out the salary of the Secretary of Embassy, which, even at Paris, only amounted to £1200. As a

matter of fact, an Ambassador was often hard hit by this rule : he had usually to maintain his household, and he had very often to live expensively in London in order to be in touch with the Government and with the kind of society which would enable him to keep up to date in regard to politics and public opinion generally. Under the new system the *Chargé d'Affaires* had, as Counsellor of Embassy (this being a new name for Secretaries of Embassy), a salary and allowances sufficient to enable him to keep up a good position ; and except in distant posts, where the Head of the Mission had less frequent but longer spells of leave, it was seldom necessary for the *Chargé d'Affaires* to incur any great additional expenses : even at distant posts, though some event might happen for which it was impossible for the Chief to return, nothing much was, or is, expected of his deputy.

It was arranged, therefore, that the Head of the Mission should retain his allowances in full while on ordinary leave of absence. This was not only fair to him but eliminated some cause of misunderstanding between the Chief and the second in command, who, in some cases, was apt to grumble loudly if the superior did not take his full leave ; and still more loudly if, as has been known to happen, he took it in the country to which he was accredited, thus giving the *Chargé d'Affaires* additional work and responsibility without remuneration.

It was becoming increasingly common for Under Secretaries and Assistant Under Secretaries to be appointed to Embassies and Legations : Sir Francis Bertie, Sir Francis Villiers, Sir Louis Mallet, Sir



Beilby Alston, Sir George Clerk, and myself, followed each other abroad, and most of us would have found this difficult under the old regulations. Apart from the question of financial resources, an enormous amount of anxiety and trouble is saved by finding a furnished house; and thing will be still better when the Government own a house in every foreign capital. It must not be supposed that the new regulations met the view of every man in the Service, or that diplomats did not soon become so well accustomed to their new incomes as to find them at times too small. This was bound to happen, but the views of the man on the spot do not always carry complete conviction at home on the point of cost of living. A former Chief Clerk once culled from his correspondence with diplomats and consuls a list of the countries which were notoriously the most expensive in the world, and of the towns which in those countries were equally notorious for their expensiveness. The list was a long one. Nevertheless, I believe that the friendly co-operation between the Treasury and the Foreign Office in drawing up the new scheme did produce a scheme which was reasonably fair to all parties.

One difficulty was inevitable. This was that a diplomat with an income of say £1000 a year might now be suddenly transferred, willy-nilly, to the Foreign Office, and have to live on an income of £300 or £400. This was a disagreeable necessity, but fair to the Exchequer.

I believe that as years go by and the conditions of the Service sink into the minds of parents and

guardians they will learn to consider it an attractive one, even for the impecunious. I only hope that by the time those conditions become really well known it will not have been found necessary to alter them materially for the worse.

Immediately after the war the Foreign Office had to spare for the Versailles Conference something like half the Office, while many of the temporary clerks were transferred to Paris, where a huge office was set up. Among them were an army of experts on every subject that was likely to be discussed. I gather that those in the highest places were at times bewildered, to repeat a word already used, by this multitude of counsellors. The "hands" that Lord Salisbury disliked were so numerous that it seemed impossible ever to reach a correct conclusion on questions, for instance, of nationality and frontiers. Those matters, however, are, in Queen Elizabeth's phrase, "too great" for the writers of this book.

## Chapter IX

### ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS

THE Chief Clerk's Department is the oldest of the administrative departments, as will have been seen from several references to it in the earlier chapters. The Chief Clerk managed, and I believe still manages, the interior economy of the Foreign Office, the arrangement of the building, the Messenger Service abroad and at home. He also shared, and still shares, with the Private Secretaries and with the Head of the Consular Department, the management of the Diplomatic and Consular Services. Promotion in the Diplomatic Service was in the hands of the Secretary of State himself, or in those of his Private Secretaries acting for him, and appointments to consulships and vice-consulships were also made by them until 1903. At the same time, the Chief Clerk had a voice in such matters as being the expert on rules and regulations, and the authority on all matters of finance, giving decisions, which used to be regarded as almost indisputable, as to what could be done and what could not. I refer particularly to this last point because when I was acting as Head of the Consular Department it seemed to me that too much regard had in the past been paid to the Chief Clerk's decisions. He was the expert, therefore he must be right. The correct view was,

I believe, that he was necessarily consulted, but that there was no reason why the Secretary of State should not insist on putting before the Treasury a proposal of which the Chief Clerk disapproved. In any matters on which the Secretary of State had a personal opinion he would naturally do so. When I was Chief Clerk myself, some of my staff, who had been for a great many years in the Department used to say that our primary duty was to protect the fisc. Colleagues said that any one coming into their room was received with loud cries of "No, no," before he had time to open his mouth and indicate the nature of his business. Their attitude was no doubt right enough, especially as the Chief Clerk was at that time the Accounting Officer of the Foreign Office, and part of his duty was to appear and justify his Office before the Committee of Public Accounts. Nevertheless, while he might say that some proposal was, in his opinion, inadvisable, or even wrong, he had no real right to override the Head of the Consular Department, or any other department, as those officials bowing to the expert, sometimes allowed themselves to be overridden.

In regard to expenditure within the estimates he has always had, one way or another, a very great influence on the existence of all Foreign Office servants abroad. Much depends on whether, in his construction of the rules about leave of absence, in his views about legitimate and illegitimate charges in travelling and other accounts, in his intervention between his own service and the Treasury or the Office of Works, he is benevolent or otherwise.

In these and other matters his position, and the manner in which he discharged his duties, depended greatly on the readiness of the Permanent Under Secretary to interest himself in administrative details. Sir Arthur Nicolson, for instance, did not greatly interest himself in such matters, and the Chief Clerk therefore tended to become an executive officer to a greater degree than was perhaps proper in view of his duty to the fisc.

The most disagreeable part of a Chief Clerk's duty was, until the appointment after the War of a separate Accounting Officer, that of appearing before the Committee of Public Accounts. There used very often to be one or more members who seemed to regard the Chief Clerk as a refractory witness, if not actually a criminal, when he was unable to explain some item to their satisfaction. His difficulty was that, although the questions were generally based on the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General, it was impossible to foresee just what direction those questions would take, or which points would interest the Committee, and the answers had to be given more or less from memory, as it was impossible to come armed with papers for any emergency, and some rapidity was expected. I presume that the Accounting Officer of the spending departments must have an examination on rather different lines. I speak only of my own office. It is not very easy to estimate the value of the examination in view of the fact that the money in question has been spent and cannot be recovered, but I suppose the prospect of it inspires

a certain wholesome fear in those who are responsible for the spending.

The Messenger Service, which is now managed by the Chief Clerk, was originally controlled by the Lord Chamberlain, the Messengers being Messengers of the Great Chamber. Even after the creation of the Foreign Office in 1782 the Messengers remained common to the three Secretaries of State until 1822, from which date the Foreign Office had its own staff under the control, oddly enough, of the Librarian. A division was made in 1824 between Home Service and Foreign Service Messengers, and later on the latter were recruited from a different social class; Mr. Hammond, before the Committee of 1861, explained the status of the Home Service Messengers by saying that he believed they waited at table; the Foreign Service Messengers were often retired officers. Many of the journeys were extremely arduous, and their nature is reflected in the charge, which regularly appeared in their accounts long after travelling by railway had become universal, "to crossing rivers and mountains." In the earlier part of the nineteenth century they travelled when possible in their own coaches, and otherwise on horseback; one of them, Colonel Townley, in evidence in 1861, lamented that when coaches were abolished he was allowed £25 by the Foreign Office for one which had cost him 200 guineas. Sir Edward Hertslet in his book gives a list of fearful accidents which have befallen Messengers, and minor disagreeable incidents were no doubt common. I have seen in one account rendered by a Messenger

for a journey to Lord Cornwallis's house in Suffolk, a charge for the loss of watch and chain taken by highwaymen, put in, without comment, apparently as a very commonplace happening. The duty of the Chief Clerk was to see that there was always a Messenger ready for duty, and to check the accounts; obviously not a very easy task in early days. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the journeys and the charges for them had become stereotyped: there was a journey to St. Petersburg, taking Berlin and lesser posts on the way; and another to Constantinople, the messenger dropping bags at Vienna and some of the Balkan capitals. Posts off the route sent to fetch their bags at the nearest station. There were also journeys to Paris. The Rome bag was taken by the Post Office Messenger who went to Brindisi; the Lisbon bag went by Royal Mail, and I think the Madrid bag went with it. There were also occasional extra journeys, for instance when the Queen or Lord Salisbury was abroad. The silver greyhound, the badge of the Messengers, was already theirs early in the eighteenth century. According to Lord Hammond it had some connexion with the Messengers' former dependence on the Lord Chamberlain's Department; a statement which shows little imagination.

The number of Messengers was gradually reduced during the nineteenth century as cipher communication by telegraph became possible. Critics sometimes suggested that despatches might be sent in cipher by post; this was actually done before the days of the telegraph, but it involves a vast

expenditure of time at both ends. Other critics did not make sufficient allowance for the predatory instincts of foreign Governments, some instances of which I have already given.

The Home Service Messengers in the second half of the nineteenth century were simply promoted office-keepers, whose careers had begun at Hatfield or elsewhere. In the present century, even before the War, we had some ex-soldiers as office-keepers, one of whom rejoined the Army in 1914, reached the rank of Captain, and on the conclusion of peace returned to his former service, and became a Home Service Messenger.

Although the Private Secretaries did not constitute a department, they may be said to have administered the Diplomatic Service. From the time that the Secretary of State ceased to take an interest in minor appointments, that branch of work, including the general control of the junior diplomats, was undertaken by the Private Secretary; subject, no doubt, to control by the Under Secretary when necessary. Lord Clarendon seems to have exercised a personal supervision, but I do not suppose that Lord Salisbury ever did, or probably Lord Granville. Sanderson was Private Secretary to Lord Derby (then Lord Stanley) from 1866 to 1868 and from 1874 to 1878, and to Lord Granville from 1880 to 1885. Eric Barrington was with Lord Salisbury, then with Lord Iddesleigh, and with Lord Salisbury again from 1885 to 1892, with an interval of a few months in 1886, when Francis Villiers acted for Lord Rosebery, as he did again from 1892 to 1894. Barrington resumed in 1895,



and was first with Lord Salisbury and then with Lord Lansdowne till 1905. Lord Salisbury's Private Secretary from 1878 to 1880 was Philip Currie. Eric Barrington was therefore Private Secretary in all for seventeen years, and looked after all questions of appointment to the Service, the behaviour or misbehaviour of juniors, transfers from one post to another, and selections for promotion to the posts of Secretary of Embassy, the rank next below Ministers, and to the minor Ministerial posts. On the whole he was very fair, even though he was supposed to be influenced in his preferences by the smartness of men's attire. This assumption was, I think, exaggerated, and the prejudice, if it existed, was countered by young men taking good care to wear their best clothes, particularly their best patent leather boots, when they went to see the Private Secretary. He was occasionally, no doubt, amenable to the arguments of a persuasive talker, and I remember Sir Nicholas O'Connor telling me that, when as a Secretary he was anxious for some particular post, he travelled half across Europe in order to put forward his wishes personally. Nevertheless, I believe that Barrington's rule was successful, and it was an excellent thing for the Service to have a recognised chief, whom they all knew and liked and who was quasi-permanent. After his day there were more rapid changes among the Private Secretaries. From the end of 1915 the Assistant Private Secretary, successor to the Précis Writer, was for a few years converted into a Diplomatic Secretary, and the Diplomatic Service was under his special care.

The post was given to a senior diplomat, and Mr. Russell had the rank of Minister while so employed. In 1921 the title of Diplomatic Secretary was abolished; but the Assistant Private Secretary does much of his work, although, being a junior, with less authority, while transfers and appointments are now in the hands of a Committee.

The management of the Service is a matter of great delicacy, which requires intimate acquaintance with the idiosyncracies of each member. A hundred years ago an Ambassador's staff was regularly spoken of as his family. The various Committees of the House of Commons who inquired into the Diplomatic Service asked searching questions about the extent to which any sort of family life prevailed; in practice it does, to a large though varying extent, prevail still. In all missions, great and small, the Head of the Mission and his staff and their respective families are in constant association, and, even more perhaps in a small mission than in a large one, regard must be paid to the chances of the members of the staff being sympathetic to each other, if that mission is to be satisfactorily conducted.

The family circumstances of diplomats must be considered; also their health. Although in theory they are bound to go wherever they are sent, it is not always politic or generous to insist on the letter of the law. The interests of the State must be reconciled as far as possible with the interests of the men; it may really be desirable that A should be kept for years at Paris, although B, who passes those years in distant quarters of the globe, may not see it. There are posts, which it would be invidious

to specify, where British interests are of great importance, but which are unpopular; men may make foolish objection to going there, and sometimes such a plausible case that they escape their destiny. While it is no doubt hard to condemn a charming and able person to a post which he dislikes, or thinks he will dislike, it is exceedingly undesirable to make certain posts into a reserve for those who are less charming or less able. There is, or was, for the Private Secretary, the exceedingly disagreeable duty of telling men that they could have no further promotion, that they could never be made Secretaries, or Counsellors of Embassy, or Ministers, and that they should retire. This task was greatly facilitated by the Diplomatic Pensions Act. Under that Act any one who had been for fifteen years in the Service, and had actually served abroad for ten years, was entitled to a pension. This was an extremely valuable arrangement for a Service where a man, through no fault of his own, might easily be unsuitable to represent his country. Competence to hold an independent and responsible representative post cannot be judged in the same way as competence to perform secretarial duties in a London office; and it would have been hard on many men to be stigmatised by resort to the Act of 1887, under which a man might be removed from the Service for incompetence, but with the formality that a Treasury minute setting forth the circumstances should be laid before Parliament.

This appears to be the proper place for a brief account of the Foreign Office Agency System, which excited much controversy in the 'fifties and 'sixties

of the last century. The history of this system may be gathered from the evidence given upon the many Committees of the years between 1858 and 1872. Its origin is lost in the mists of antiquity, but it was in full force in \* 1785, when an inquiry was held into its working—an inquiry which was so far favourable that Agencies were expressly allowed by Order in Council of 27th February 1795. They continued to work well, and in 1816 regulations were laid down for their conduct by Lord Castlereagh, under which, among other things, the Commission to be charged on the salaries of Ambassadors and Ministers was not to exceed 1 per cent.

The Agents were self-appointed, being merely clerks, below the rank of Assistant Under Secretary, who undertook to attend to the affairs of members of the Diplomatic Service during their absence abroad. Their functions are set forth in a paper drawn up by Mr. Alston, dated 4th August 1872, after their abolition, when the Foreign Office was considering how to replace them. Mr. Alston, it should be stated, was himself an Agent with a very large share of the business.

(1) There was first of all the receipt and disposal of the salaries and allowances of His Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Officers.

(2) The Agent took charge of all letters, newspapers, and parcels for his client, and forwarded them by Foreign Office bag, or by post, only small parcels being allowed in the bag. He made purchases and executed commissions for his client.

\* Select Committee of 1870. Answer No. 1691. See also F.O 366/376 and 366/377, 1868-1871, in Record Office.

He maintained a constant correspondence with his client, who consulted his Agent on all matters imaginable—not excluding, of course, those affecting his personal interest. It was precisely this last function which excited the criticism of the House of Commons and Press, who refused to believe, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, and of the solemn declarations of Lord Russell and Lord Clarendon, who spoke very strongly, that the Agents did not somehow exercise undue influence to further the interests of their clients in matters of transfer and promotions.

There can, nevertheless, be little doubt that no such influence was used, except, as was allowed, in order to arrange an exchange between a man serving abroad and one serving at home, by which no third party was injured. Indeed it is difficult to see how the Agents could have used such influence, seeing that all members of the Service employed an Agent. There was never any suggestion that diplomatic officers bid against each other for the favour of the Agents, or the Agents for the favour of the Secretary of State. If anything of that sort had been done, the system could not possibly have remained popular and continued to receive the expressed approval of its clients for a hundred years; and practically every witness before the Select Committee did express such approval.

In the end public opinion was too strong for the Foreign Office. Lord Clarendon talked of abolition in 1854, not because of any fault in the system, but because other Public Departments had abolished agencies; but the proposal fell through, apparently

because nothing could be settled about compensation for the Agents. The Select Committee of 1858 expressed a favourable opinion. In 1867 Lord Stanley proposed to abolish them, because he thought the system incompatible with the provisions of the Exchequer Audit Act of 1866, which concentrated the administration of Foreign Office funds in the hands of the Office; but it was not so incompatible that, when the Treasury again refused compensation to the Agents, he did not allow them to continue.

They finally ceased to exist on 30th November 1870 in deference, as Mr. Hammond told the select Committee of that year, to the wish understood to be felt by the House of Commons, and to Lord Clarendon's feeling that it was not for the benefit of the Service that the controversy should be allowed to continue. As usual Hammond foresaw the worst possible results from the change, and was afraid that the Diplomatic and Consular Service would suffer very much. Indeed, he lauded the system so highly that a Member of the Committee pertinently asked why the Foreign Office did not insist on its maintenance, only to be told that the Foreign Office could not fight the public either in the Press or even the House of Commons over matters which were not of general public importance.

Oddly enough, although there were occasional attacks in the Press, not very much was said before the Committees about the desirability or otherwise of Foreign Office clerks earning such large addition to their salaries as the Agents did. The average annual receipts between 1851 and 1853 were £3633, but in 1867 Messrs. Alston and Bidwell, who were

in partnership, divided unequally\* a sum of about £4000. These last figures were given in the *Morning Post* in connection with a violent attack on Mr. Murray, the Assistant Under Secretary, who was accused of responsibility, through his negligence, for bringing about the Abyssinian War. The humorous part of this correspondence is the fact that, as it happened, Mr. Murray, on becoming Assistant Under Secretary, had resigned his Agency.

Alston, as I used to be told, lived in terror of being offered an Assistant Under Secretaryship, because, under the agreement made with the Treasury for compensation, such an offer would have made it necessary for him to resign his Agency. As it was, he continued to hold the post of Chief Clerk for another twenty years after the abolition of the Agencies, and drew a compensation allowance equal to two-thirds of the average net profits made over the last three years.

A great deal of the evidence about the inconvenience which men abroad would suffer without Agents turned on the idea that it would be impossible for them in future to have their letters and parcels forwarded. In reality nothing was simpler. Letters and parcels for Members of the Office were delivered there as a matter of course, and all that was needed was for some junior to put letters arriving for his diplomatic colleagues in the respective bags.

Salaries were paid into men's banks, and I presume that those banks did not require the clients to maintain, as Mr. Hammond expected they would, a

\* See extracts from the *Morning Post* in F.O. Gen., 2, 1799-1867.

balance of at least £150. If they did, they were grievously disappointed.

The whole matter excited very much more interest than it deserved. The system worked satisfactorily and did no harm. Its abolition proved equally satisfactory, and no one, I believe, was a whit the worse for it.

One thing that was often mentioned in the evidence, but rather as a complaint against the Foreign Office or the Treasury than against the Agents, was a real hardship ; this was the rule that a salary could not be paid until a despatch was received from the person interested, certifying that he was alive and at his post on the last day of the quarter. In the case of men at distant posts this meant long delay, and the Press sometimes—unjustly no doubt—accused the Agents of causing, and profiting by, further delay between their receipt of the salary and its transmission to their client. The old system of Life Certificates still held good until the War. We then succeeded in so far modifying it that a telegram from the Head of the Mission was accepted as evidence that his staff were at their posts. After the War we were obliged to go back to despatches, but diplomats were allowed to draw bills locally for part of their salary, subject to the risk that, if their Life Certificates were delayed, there might be difficulty about such bills. For Consuls, Life Certificates may be more necessary, because it is conceivable that a Consul might die, or disappear, without the fact at once becoming known to the Foreign Office, and his salary be fraudulently drawn ; but the unsuspected death or disappearance of a diplomat, who is one of



several, and whose movements are observed by the Government of the country where he resides, is almost inconceivable.

The Treaty Department may perhaps be included among the Administrative Departments. Its claims to be such are shadowy, but no more suitable place remains for it. Its functions in 1919, as defined by the Foreign Office, make quite a formidable list. They included, besides ceremonial questions, such matters as nationality, extradition, passport rules, territorial waters, and, so the Foreign Office list put it, Peace Conferences. To put the last item in the plural may have been a touch of humour. Besides all this there was the formal preparation of Treaties with Royal Letters and Full Powers, to which more than one allusion has already been made.

Royal letters are, for obvious reasons, a diminishing quantity, but in Queen Victoria's time they were very numerous—births, deaths, and marriages in Royal families alone accounting for a great deal of work. The Queen's many relationships with foreign Courts made some of the letters read curiously. Best of all that I remember was a letter to the late Empress of Russia, beginning, "Madam My Sister, Cousin and dear Grand-daughter." Of letters received I seem to recollect with pleasure letters from the Austrian Court announcing that some lady of the Imperial Family had been safely delivered of an Archduchess, which always seemed to me a most portentous event. Up to the time of which I am writing, all these letters were written in a most beautiful copperplate hand. The Treaty Department have never again suffered from a Marvin; but they did, not so many years ago,

have a second division clerk who was afflicted with a habit of hiding or making away with papers that were too much for him. This is, however, not so rare a phenomenon as might be supposed, and occurred some twenty-five years ago in the case of a senior clerk, whose home when searched yielded up masses of lost treasure.

One of the subjects dealt with by the Treaty Department is the bestowal of British decorations on foreigners, and the acceptance of foreign decorations by British subjects. This, although our strictness in such matters is fairly well known, sometimes causes trouble. Men who have received a foreign decoration are often annoyed to find that they cannot wear it. British representatives, anxious to see a foreigner decorated for some service, are apt to be equally annoyed at finding that their recommendations go no further than the department. In the long run, probably, the balance of advantage is in favour of the maintenance of our stoical attitude in such matters, for British decorations, when they are given, are highly appreciated.

Peace Conferences used to be included in the list of Treaty Department functions. This doubtless referred to the Hague conferences of 1899 and 1907, for the Treaty Department had not much more to do with the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 than the preparation of credentials.

Passport regulations, which became so serious a matter during the War, were then handed over to what became practically a separate department.

Extradition follows precedent, in so far as it is not a matter for legal opinion.

The great and well-preserved reputation of the Treaty Department is for accuracy.

The administrative departments which I have so far described were concerned entirely with the domestic economy of the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service. For some years the Office was also charged with the administration of British possessions overseas. Its first responsibility of this kind was for Cyprus, but the arrangement lasted only for a few years, and by 1893 the existence of the Cyprus Department would have been forgotten but for a relic left in the Eastern Department, in the shape of a picture of the conversion of the governor of Cyprus and the blinding of Elymas by Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas.

A more serious undertaking was the administration during their infancy of the British Protectorates in East, West, and Central Africa by the African Department of the Foreign Office, or, as it became in 1900, the Protectorates Department. The African Department itself was the outcome of the old Slave Trade Department, established by Lord Castlereagh to deal with the correspondence arising out of the agreement for putting down the Slave Trade made at the Congress of Vienna. In 1821 the correspondence for the year amounted to 155 letters and despatches received and 29 sent: the maximum was reached in 1845 when the whole correspondence amounted to 4198, after which it declines rather rapidly. The work, which was mainly routine, and concerned with the proper fulfilment of regulations, was done by four clerks, outside the diplomatic establishment, under the superintendence of a

Senior Clerk from the Office proper. For many years the Senior Clerk was the Bandinel whose capability was praised by Lord Granville. Later, as Slave Trade work became insufficient for a separate department, a new department was formed to deal with African affairs (other than those of Northern Africa) and Consular affairs. This was in 1878. The combination was not so gratuitous as it may sound, because the Foreign Office representatives in the regions concerned were all Consuls. It came to an end in 1893 when African affairs and Consular affairs were committed to separate departments.

The Foreign Office, on account of its African policy, was subjected in 1867 to a violent attack in the *Morning Post*, Mr. Murray, the Assistant Under Secretary, being accused of having brought about the Abyssinian War by his personal negligence. Some of the more violent letters were signed "Ex-Minister." Murray was accused of having mislaid a letter from King Theodore to the Queen, and of having failed to show it to his superiors. He was represented as flouting the Secretary of State and even the Queen, of gross rudeness to members of the public who called to see him, and a great deal was said about his misdeeds as a Foreign Office Agent, which, as we have already seen, he had, unfortunately for his critic, ceased to be.

The writer declared that the dangerous pretence (of the Foreign Office staff) to be more than copying clerks had just brought about a war\*: "Whatever they do more than they are required is just fussy assumption."

\* F.O. Gen., No. 2, 1799-1867.

“ Clerks should have nothing whatever to do with State affairs : their only concern should be how to satisfy the requirements of those who employ them, and they should fill with modesty and good sense the subordinate position to which only their talents and services entitle them.” *The Times* hoped no more would be heard of decision of character as a reason for lauding clerks’ appointments.

Lord Stanley defended Mr. Murray and the Department in the House of Commons, declaring that the accusations against Murray were simply and absolutely without foundation. The letter alleged to have been kept back bore a minute by the Secretary of State, Lord Russell himself, and, as a matter of fact, anything but the simplest mechanical routine came before the Secretary of State. Mr. Layard, the Under Secretary, spoke to the same effect, explaining that King Theodore’s letter received no answer because it required no answer. Mr. Hammond was described as more intimately acquainted with foreign affairs than any man in this country, and Murray as being a gentleman of great distinction and ability.

At the same time Cameron, the Consul in Abyssinia, was not exempted from blame, as he had meddled too much with the internal politics. For the benefit of any one who might regard this as evidence that diplomats do involve the country in war, it may be added that Cameron was by profession a soldier and had only been employed in Abyssinia as Consul for a few years.

*The Times* in its leader made the sarcastic comment that on this occasion Lord Russell for the first time

in his life omitted an opportunity for writing a despatch ; it did not recommend the discussion in the House to the attention of its readers, believing that the attacks on officials were the result of personal spleen and private animosity. This incident was doubtless in Mr. Hammond's mind when he made his peroration before the Select Committee of 1870.

In 1900 the work of administration was so heavy that it was decided to form a Protectorates Department under a Superintendent of Protectorates with the rank of Assistant Under Secretary. Writing to the Treasury for the necessary authority on 7th May of that year, the Foreign Office pointed out that the expenditure of the five Protectorates—British Central Africa, East Africa, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Somaliland—had risen from £118,975 in 1895-1896 to £559,510 in 1899-1900. Supervision was too much for one of the Under Secretaries with other interests to consider, while the many diplomatic questions involved made it impossible at present to hand the work over to the Colonial Office. The first Superintendent was Sir Clement Hill, who took the deepest interest in the Protectorates and a fatherly interest in their officials. He paid an official visit of inspection to the Protectorates during his term of office, which he enjoyed all the more for being a great sportsman. It was characteristic of him that he used frequently to come to the Foreign Office on horseback, and he managed his dominions somewhat in the spirit of a high-minded country gentleman with large estates.

In a memorandum of 15th May 1901, prepared with a view to meeting parliamentary criticism,

some account is given of each of the four Protectorates then under Foreign Office control—British Central Africa, Uganda, British East Africa, and Somaliland. Zanzibar is not mentioned as its status was different. British Central Africa (now Nyassaland) had been founded in 1891, as a result of an agreement with the Portuguese, whom we had forestalled—so the memorandum puts it—in their endeavour to overrun the whole of the region. The first administrator was Harry Johnston, who organised the territory with great energy, in the face of many difficulties arising from the constant warfare between native slave raiders. By 1901 there were over a hundred British employees, and a revenue of £52,000. The writer of the memorandum, Sir Clement Hill, admitted that the question had been raised of handing over the Protectorate to the Colonial Office, but he was loth to lose for the Foreign Office the credit of rearing so successful a child. Johnston, who was a great figure in African history, was a familiar one in the Foreign Office, and often to be found in the African Department while on leave. He painted a charming little picture in which the members of the department figure as birds, headed by Hillia Clemens, and Larcomus probus (Arthur Larcom), the former a large solemn-looking bird, the latter as some kind of falcon; among the others was Hugh Grosvenor as a canary.

To return to the memorandum :

Uganda had also had a chequered career, which Frederick Jackson had guided with success, in spite of religious disputes and a mutiny of Sudanese soldiers. Her Majesty's Government had been obliged to take

over the country prematurely from the British East Africa Company, and the wonder was that we had held it all. Notwithstanding difficulties great progress had been made ; the railway had been built in part, steamers placed on the lake, telegraphic connection with London established ; the revenue had risen from nothing to £50,000. There were eighty-six white officials, 1500 native police, besides 414 Indian, and 1116 native troops.

Although not mentioned in the memorandum the use of the railway in 1897 had saved the lives of the white population during the mutiny.

East Africa, taken over from the British East Africa Company in 1895, had had a quieter history ; so had Somaliland, which had been taken over from the India Office in 1898 for reasons connected with our Abyssinian policy.

The writer of the memorandum, in summing up, records with legitimate pride that slavery had been suppressed, that the condition of the natives was improving and the leaven of civilisation at work. The railway brought food to the starving ; missionaries were at work ; laws had been passed to prevent the use of firearms and of liquor : medical service was being developed : commerce was still in its infancy except for some Indian petty tradesmen. There was a good class of officials, though they suffered from the want of healthy posts. He quotes as his motto the principles of the Brussels Act : first the welfare of the natives, second the promotion of commerce.

Similar memoranda in succeeding years record continued progress : the formation of the King's



African Rifles, with, in 1902, 104 officers and 4579 men; the establishment of justice and order; the stamping out of plague in East Africa; the sending of a Commission to Uganda to investigate sleeping sickness. In 1904 settlers are coming in and the Foreign Office is especially concerned about the care of native interests. The primary object of their administration is said to be the welfare of the native races. Settlers seeing the fine grazing grounds are apt to ignore (the writer may mean "to be unaware of") the original object of our occupation of the country. In 1905 the Uganda Railway is said to justify our most sanguine prediction. Of all the results directly due to the British administration of the African Protectorates, the most satisfactory was the complete abolition of the Slave Trade.

During the preceding year, however, the transfer of the Protectorate to the Colonial Office had begun; British Central Africa in 1904, Uganda, East Africa, and Somaliland on 1st April 1905; Zanzibar alone remained under Foreign Office administration till 1st January 1914, the reason for the distinction being the existence of a Sultanate.

In practice the administration of Zanzibar was in the hands of the Head of the African Department, although he no longer bore the title of Superintendent and worked under an Assistant Under Secretary. Neither the latter, nor still less the Permanent Under Secretary or the Secretary of State, interfered except on rare occasions; and successive Heads of the Department took a deep interest in the fortunes of the island. Walrond Clarke, like Sir Clement Hill, paid a visit of inspec-

tion to Zanzibar, and subsequently himself became Agent and Consul-General.

Zanzibar became a Protectorate in 1890, Sir Gerald Portal of the Diplomatic Service being the first Agent and Consul-General. He was succeeded in 1894 by Sir Arthur Hardinge, who in 1896 became also Commissioner for the East African Protectorate. After him came Sir Charles Eliot, three diplomats in succession being thus turned into administrators. East Africa then passed to the Colonial Office, and Sir Basil Cave, whose whole career had been in East Africa, became Agent and Consul-General. Then came Clarke, a Foreign Office clerk, strangely metamorphosed, but, I believe, both happy and successful and certainly enthusiastic. He died at his post in 1913.

One of the great advantages enjoyed by those who helped to administer Zanzibar was that it had its own revenue independent of the control of the British Treasury, and we believed that this liberty conduced to economy. Great care was taken in supervising the Budget and controlling public expenditure, and in choosing suitable officials for employment there, and we may claim to have been successful. One serious difficulty which arose was the necessity of persuading the extravagant Sultan Ali-bin-Hamoud to abdicate. He was in London at the time, and the feat was successfully accomplished; but I remember a moment of considerable alarm when he asked me to come and see him in his flat, where I had just heard that he was sitting with a revolver beside him, possibly meditating suicide. It was the ascent in the lift that I liked least.

Before leaving the Protectorates I must say something more about that great achievement, the Uganda Railway. In the words of the report drawn up when the Committee of Management was dissolved in September 1903, the railway represented the contribution of this country to the execution of its obligations under the Brussels Act. Lord Salisbury, who took deep interest in the construction of the railway, had decided in 1895 that it should be carried out by the Government without a contractor, on Indian methods and with Indian coolies. Sir Percy Anderson, then Assistant Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, was the first Chairman of the Committee, which received its instructions from the Secretary of State verbally. The choice of Indian coolies was made because the natives would have been unable to distinguish contract labour from slave labour. The work prospered, but was more than once hindered by strikes in England, and the Committee had in consequence to order half of its locomotives from the United States and some from India. Also they had to accept an American tender for the construction of twenty-seven viaducts, because the best English firms refused to tender for more than the supply of materials at English ports. Bubonic plague in India, malarial fever, jigger pest, and tsetse fly were other enemies of progress, and so were the heavy rains. Nevertheless, at a cost of £5,550,000 success was eventually achieved, and, as we have seen, triumphant success.

During the twenty years before the Great War the African Department had its full share of

anxieties apart from administration: the South African War, the discussions with Germany about the Portuguese Colonies, the controversies with the Belgian Government over the Congo, and the allegations of slavery in the Portuguese islands. Besides this, there were continual frontier questions with Belgium and Germany, difficulties in Abyssinia and Somaliland, and repeated international conferences about the Arms Traffic and the Liquor Traffic, which were attended by the Head of the African Department. At home there were such incidental interests as the development of tropical medicine—altogether a very wide range.

## Chapter X

### THE COMMERCIAL AND CONSULAR DEPARTMENTS

Of all the attacks made from time to time on the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, none has been so recurrent, and none so misleading, as the accusation that they took no interest in commercial matters. They have always been deeply interested in commercial matters, and the machinery for dealing with such questions has been constantly improved. As a rule it takes the general public several years to realise that a reform, of which they cannot see the working for themselves, has taken place, and critics habitually continue their attacks on this or that condition of things long after it has passed away. In regard to the commercial side of Foreign Office work the case is different. Traders know very well that changes have taken place, but they maintain that *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. The reason is that the Foreign Office and the traders from whom the criticism mostly comes are thinking of two different things. The Foreign Office is concerned to secure the best terms it can for British trade as a whole, and to give traders all possible protection. Without tariffs to bargain with it did its best with commercial treaties, and, in spite of the feeling appar-

ently held among some sections of the community that a British subject who goes abroad to make money deserves no support if he gets into trouble, the Foreign Office may claim to have afforded adequate protection to its clients in most cases. The critics want assistance for the individual trader to sell his goods, or obtain contracts; a kind of assistance which they believe to be given by most, and which *is* given by some, foreign Governments.

Consequently, when complaint is made that our Consuls are not so efficient as those of some other country, it does not satisfy the critic to be told that the Consuls of that other country are less efficient than ours in their performance of the duties which the Foreign Office thinks proper for Consuls.

I believe that the Foreign Office was right and the critics wrong, at least so long as British trade was in the ascendant. These critics were most often small traders, and publicists who had heard tales of the indifference of diplomats to commercial matters. By big business the Foreign Office has generally been strongly supported.

I have said that the Foreign Office was always concerned for the promotion of trade. This was eminently the case when Sovereigns controlled the Foreign Office themselves. No one disputes Queen Elizabeth's interest in commerce. Charles II is less famous in that respect, but perhaps unjustly so. Mr. C. R. Boxer, in a paper recently written for the Asiatic Society of Japan, gives a very interesting account of an effort made by the East India Company to reopen trade between Great Britain and Japan. Their expedition was furnished by

Charles II with a letter to the Shogun, who ruled Japan under the Emperor, but in this country was supposed to be Emperor. The King assures him that "England affords such great varieties and quantities of woollen cloths and stuffs fit for the clothing of all sorts of persons, which not only tend to ye great health and fortifying ye spirits of and delight to them that wear them, especially in such climates as your Empire, but are much more lasting and cheaper than other clothing." This is in the best style of modern advertisement, almost more American than English, and is the sort of help which the critics of whom I have been speaking would like the Foreign Office to give them.

This is not a history of British commercial policy, but it is permissible to recall the fact that Chatham founded an Empire for the benefit of British trade, and that his son, though there was nothing so spectacular for him to do, devoted immense pains and thought to commercial work and especially to the commercial treaty with France of 1786, which he negotiated with the help of the first Lord Auckland as Ambassador at Paris. Excessive regard for the wishes of British traders lost us the American Colonies, and Canning's South American policy was inspired largely by anxiety for the promotion of British trade, and was strongly supported by the City and other commercial interests.

It was Canning who, in 1825, reorganised the Consular Department of the Foreign Office and gave it a special superintendent.

In 1835 there was a secret Committee of the House of Commons on the Consular establishment,

and their Report makes a good beginning for an account of the commercial organisation of the Foreign Office. In the Instructions to Consuls annexed to the Report it is laid down that the Consul "will bear in mind that it is his principal duty to protect and promote the lawful trade and trading interests of Great Britain by every fair and proper means." He will also "give his best advice and assistance, when called upon, to His Majesty's trading subjects, quieting their differences, promoting peace, harmony, and good will amongst them."

In the same instructions the Consul is directed, within six months from the date of his arrival at his post, to furnish as full a report as possible on the trade of the place and district. Again, a circular of 1832 requires from Consuls answers to a prodigious list of queries on trade matters, ending with the inquiry, "What, in your opinion, are the measures, the adoption of which by the Government of —, or by the Government of England, would be most likely to promote and extend the commerce now carried on between Great Britain and —."

The Consular Reports were not at that time regularly printed or published, but many of them were printed \* in the Statistical Tables published by the Board of Trade, and some of them were made use of by Mr. M'Culloch in his *Dictionary of Commerce*.

All the questions familiar to the present generation were debated in 1835: should any Consuls be permitted to trade; should any foreigners be

\* Report; No. 29.



employed ; what should their salaries be ; should Consuls be chosen from among men with commercial experience ; should the Service be under the Foreign Office or the Board of Trade ? As to that, the Committee decided for the Foreign Office. As to the other points, the evidence showed that foreigners were usually employed only when it was not worth while to pay an Englishman, and that men with commercial experience were not likely to wish for appointment to the Consular Service unless they were unsuccessful. Eighty years later Committees required to have this explained to them afresh.

One Consul \* admits that a very important part of his duty is to open new commercial channels for British industry, but it is clear that both Committee and witnesses had in their mind the development of trade, by telling the Government what to do, rather than by telling individual traders of new openings or recommending their goods. Also the Consuls felt, and rightly felt, that one of their primary duties was the protection of British traders against injustice, from which in those unregenerate days they were quite likely to suffer in many parts of the world, and they doubtless felt also less bound by respect for the judicial methods of the countries where they were stationed.

Among the annexes to the Committee's Report is a paper by a Consul, Hesketh, which refers to one of the reasons for which Consular assistance was becoming more necessary to traders. He says, "At former periods, the British trade in foreign countries was

\* Report ; No. 87o.

carried on chiefly by the ancient plan of companies and of associations called factories." He goes on to point out that the principal members of these countries lived almost permanently abroad and acquired local importance and influence with the people of the country. Things were altered when direct commerce began, for instance with South America, and a wide field was opened abroad for the exertions of active men without capital ; men came and went, and often the senior partner lived at home, and only a junior representative, without personal influence, lived abroad. All this was doubtless very true. Indeed I have always understood that, in the latter part of the century, as Consular activity became greater, it was far from popular with the great firms, who complained that it merely served to encourage small competitors, they themselves not requiring any help in the conduct of their business.

The Committee recommended little change in Foreign Office administration, except that rather more should be done in the publishing of Consular reports, which should be furnished every six months.

The Committee of 1858 made a good many suggestions : some were not new. They were in favour of Consuls being forbidden to trade, meaning apparently salaried Consuls, for they go on to speak of Consular Agents in places where a salaried British official is not required. They recommended the better payment of Consuls, the appropriation of fees to the public account, and the publication, periodically, of commercial returns in a new form. They also recommended a regular graded service with uniform salaries, especially in the Levant.

The Foreign Office, as was pointed out by the Committee of 1872, paid practically no attention to these recommendations. From Mr. Hammond's evidence it appears that the post of Superintendent of the Consular Department—a higher grade than the ordinary Head of Department—had disappeared some time before 1854. Mr. Hammond said that he and his colleague, Lord Shelburne, considered that they could not do their duty \* as Under Secretaries of State without having the whole of the correspondence pass through their hands. Later, he went further and said it would be perfectly impossible for him to carry on the business of the Office unless the whole of the Consular correspondence of his countries passed through his hands. Nobody said that was absurd, but I rather gather that the Committee thought so.

Mr. Hammond went on to give a remarkable definition of his own position in relation to the Secretary of State† :

“ Everything upon which any question can arise which is personal to any man, when there is any application for employment, or a question in which any man's feelings are concerned, I send, as a matter of course, to the Secretary of State ; that is the rule I have laid down. Whatever a man represents on behalf of himself, anything that may arise in matters of trade, anything about questions which may be mooted in Parliament, questions of general policy and commercial business, are invariably sent to the Secretary of State. I reckon that the Under Secretary of State has no business to give a decision upon

\* No. 3.

† No. 11.

any point ; he is merely the channel and ministerial officer, who is bound to advise and to recommend to the Secretary of State what he thinks should be done, but he has no independent action at all."

In answer to another question \* Mr. Hammond laid down the principle that "there is no pressure which you cannot get through by method." "The whole thing is method and never letting the work get into arrear." "It is the practice in the Foreign Office never to let a thing stand over beyond a Saturday if you can possibly clear it off. It is very easy, if once you adopt that rule, to carry it through."

He wanted nothing done but the building of a new Foreign Office.

The evidence brings out the fact that the examination of Consuls was, as it remained till 1903, a very simple one : it required a correct knowledge of French, a certain knowledge of mercantile law to enable them to deal with shipping questions, and a knowledge of the language of the country to which the Consul was going—this being taken to mean German in the North of Europe and Italian east of the Straits of Gibraltar. In practice, certainly at the end of the century, time was allowed for acquiring this latter knowledge.

Asked about promotion in the Consular Service, Mr. Hammond said there was no regular system of promotion. A man did not necessarily rise from a Vice-Consul to a Consul or to a Consul-General. Generally he thought it desirable that Consuls should remain many years at the same post. The same want of system prevailed till 1903, although migra-

\* No. 17.

tion and promotion were, no doubt, more frequent than they had been fifty years earlier. Hammond wanted no change : he was strongly against holding out any expectation of promotion from one grade to another ; he did not want higher salaries, though he admitted that Consuls could not live on their pay ; nor did he want more knowledge, though he would not object to more honorary distinctions.\*

Embodied in his evidence † is a circular sent out by Lord Clarendon in 1857, in which it is laid down that Secretaries of Embassy and Legation (the rank below that of Minister) were to have the special duty of collecting information relating to the commercial movements in the country where they resided and the compilation of periodical reports on the industry, trade, and general statistics of the country. These officers were occasionally to visit the great manufacturing towns and outposts, and witness the course of business there, and if necessary suggest, from personal experience, the adoption of measures by which the trade of British subjects might obtain facilities, or be relieved from burdens and obstructions.‡ Hammond, almost as a matter of course, disliked the idea of their ever leaving their posts, even though a Secretary of State recommended it.

Secretaries of Embassy or Legation continued for fifty years to perform these duties, in many cases with much ability ; but again it is clear that, with regard to helping British subjects, what the Secretary of State had in mind was the possibility of ill-treatment.

The next witness was Mr. Ward, who, after forty

\* No. 680.

† No. 708.

‡ No. 534.

years' service, had just become Head of the Consular Department. He told the Committee that he opened all the Consular despatches and decided which he should deal with himself and which should go to the Under Secretary, and added,\* without any recorded smile, that the only despatches which he dealt with on his own responsibility were the life certificates. Mr. Alston, afterwards Chief Clerk,† made at least one illuminating remark: "We clerks are ready to do anything and everything that is required of us by the Under Secretary of State or the Secretary of State; but in point of fact the Secretary of State may be said himself to do the work of the Office."

It should be noted that by 1858 there was already a special Consular Service for China, and much was said about the necessity of constituting a similar service for the Ottoman dominions. The Service in China had been set up in 1843 when the ports were first opened, and included from the beginning student interpreters, who were acquiring a thorough knowledge of the language.

The system was regularised in 1854 and later extended to Japan and Siam. First Lord Clarendon and then Lord John Russell gave nominations to a variety of Universities and Colleges. The principle on which these were chosen does not appear, but they included first London, King's College, and some Irish Colleges; then Oxford, Cambridge, University College, and Wellington. From the time of the Superannuation Act of 1859, which made a Civil Service certificate (or alternatively

\* No. 8.

† No. 1279.

a Royal Commission) a qualification for pension, appointments to this branch of the Service were subject to competitive examination.

A similar Service for the Levant was organised \* by Sir Philip Currie in 1876. Both Services produced a remarkable series of linguists and scholars. The students for the Far East learned their languages on the spot, this being declared by experts to be essential, particularly in China, because of the great difficulty of acquiring the pronunciation. The Levant students were taught at first at Constantinople, subsequently at Oxford and Cambridge alternately, and latterly always at Cambridge, where a remarkably efficient school was established by Professor Browne.

In 1864 a select committee on trade with foreign nations made recommendations which had an important bearing on Foreign Office organisation. They suggested that there should be in the Foreign Office an officer or officers to take special charge of correspondence with the Board of Trade, and that the Board of Trade should communicate directly with Consuls through the Foreign Office. It was in pursuance of this suggestion that correspondence on commercial matters was concentrated in the so-called Slave Trade department, under a senior clerk (W. Wylde), with the title of Superintendent: the Consular work was also added to his department and remained under him till 1883, when the Consular Department was joined to the African. The title of Superintendent was given up after a few years, but in 1912 a Controller of Com-

\* Royal Commission of 1890, No. 218.

mercial and Consular affairs was appointed, which title in turn died out when the Overseas Trade Department was established.

The proceedings of this Committee were remarkable for a duel of considerable ferocity between Mr. Louis Mallet—afterwards well known as Sir Louis Mallet of the India Office—speaking for the Board of Trade, and Mr. Austin Layard speaking for the Foreign Office. Mallet quoted Hammond as saying that the Foreign Office were not intimately acquainted with the details of commercial work; he declared that the Foreign Office often could not give commercial men the information they wanted; the statistics supplied by the Foreign Office came too late. Worst of all, the Foreign Office had concluded a reciprocity treaty without consulting the Board of Trade, who, in such a case of all others, ought to have been consulted. Layard confronted Mallet with a long correspondence between the two Departments on this very subject, and showed that the negotiations were conducted entirely on a basis furnished by the Board. Mallet collapsed, and even at the next sitting of the Committee could only make a rather weak explanation of his mistake. He was also forced to contradict the evidence of another witness, who declared that Foreign Office commercial policy had no results, the truth which he had to admit being that four treaties had lately been concluded, of which two had already had considerable results.

At the end of one day's evidence Layard asked Mallet, "Do you think yourself justified in condemning the Foreign Office in the sweeping way



in which you have condemned it?" He replied that he had not said one word that was intended to imply condemnation of the Foreign Office.

One witness naïvely complained that Consuls had not succeeded in inducing foreign countries to abandon protection. He thought they might at least have been supplied with copies of Gladstone's speeches to read to the local authorities. This witness had to admit that he had never read any of the Foreign Office trade reports, and knew nothing about commercial treaties.

Palmerston is quoted as saying that he could not get tariffs reduced without anything to give in return. Lord Clarendon declared that commercial men who were dissatisfied looked for something to blame, and they fell upon the Foreign Office and the employees of the Foreign Office; in many cases they spoke upon insufficient information and upon their own supposition. We had happily adopted a system of free trade and so had very little to give. If we urged foreign countries to adopt free trade in their own interests, as had been suggested, they answered, "We are exceedingly obliged to you for the care you take of our interests, but we claim to be the best judges of them ourselves." Another point made by Clarendon, when it was suggested that business might be more rapidly discussed by word of mouth, was that records were essential. "*Littera scripta manet.*"

The Foreign Office had its outside admirers, although traders generally condemned its ignorance—its supposed ignorance, as Clarendon would have said. Several witnesses spoke highly of the courtesy

with which they were treated at the Foreign Office. One, Lindsay, a shipowner, declared it the best arranged of any Government department. On the whole, the Committee evidently thought there was not very much to complain of, and realised that witnesses were often speaking without very solid grounds for their assertions; but they did, as already stated, consider that in future there should be a special department for studying commercial affairs.

The Select Committees of 1872 did not formulate any very remarkable proposals.

One of the witnesses was Mr. Kennedy. He was the first Head of the new Commercial Department, established a few weeks earlier, and remained there till he retired in 1894. In his evidence he explained that his department could deal with all questions connected with commercial treaties, questions of tariff, imports and exports, and all matters of that description. He had previously been First Assistant in the Consular and Commercial Departments, which had existed since 1866, so that he already had considerable experience. The change, as appears from his evidence in 1890, was made because the Board of Trade thought it better that the Secretary of State should conduct foreign commercial negotiations on his own responsibility. His evidence is not otherwise of much interest.

Another witness was Richard Burton, who had, till recently, been Consul at Damascus. His evidence was brief but picturesque, particularly his description of his predecessor at Santos, who lived over a spirit shop and washed his own stockings.

By the time of the next public inquiry, that of the Royal Commission of 1890, a good deal of progress had been made.

Sir Philip Currie, who obviously knew nothing about the Commercial Department, was led in evidence to say that twenty years earlier, Ambassadors and Ministers did practically nothing for commerce; but he declared that now the Commercial Department took the initiative which had formerly been left to the Board of Trade. The great reform of which he was proud was the publication of the Consular trade reports immediately on receipt, an arrangement which was due to Lord Rosebery. One man had been told off to edit these reports. Finally, he said that it was one of the chief duties of the Foreign Office to assist the trade of the country. From him this was lip service, but it was true.

Mr. Kennedy told the Committee that the correspondence figures since 1872 had risen from 4980 to 17,000 in 1888. The department was in constant communication with the Chambers of Commerce, and consulted them in order to ascertain the wishes of the commercial community. He had visited a great many of the Chambers, and he knew of no reason to suppose that they were not satisfied with the help which they received from the Foreign Office; nor did he believe that German Consuls rendered any more assistance to trade than our own. Having said all this, he was asked whether there had not been expressions of a feeling of strong dissatisfaction in the Chambers of Commerce as to the sort of information which our manufacturers had, as com-

pared with German manufacturers. All he could reply \* was : " I should not put it as strongly as that."

He was able to tell the Committee of the earliest appointment of Commercial Attachés. Mr. Crowe was at Paris, having previously been for two years, from 1880 to 1882, at Berlin ; Mr. Law was, since 1887, at St. Petersburg, and was also responsible for Persia and Asiatic Turkey. Kennedy did not believe that, if there was a Commercial Attaché at all our Embassies, the benefit would be worth the expense ; or even feel sure that the system of having Consuls-General who would report on trade conditions would have results commensurate with the expense.

On the whole, he was a reactionary witness who saw no possible benefit in making changes.

It was Sir Percy Anderson, the head of the Consular Department, now tacked on to the African, whose evidence was interpolated between two examinations of Mr. Kennedy, who had suggested the appointment of special Consuls-General. Asked if there was not a feeling among the public that the German Consular Service was superior to ours, he expressed himself † as inclined to adopt a system under which we should have Consuls-General whose business it would be to collect information upon commercial subjects, and to assist our commercial world generally, but the Foreign Office could not adopt that system, because they dared not face the expenditure. To us, that answer sounds silly ; partly because the expenditure could be

\* No. 27698.

† No. 27338.

measured in thousands, the gross cost of the whole Service being only £273,000,\* partly because the system that Anderson was inclined to adopt was that which we had professedly followed for half a century or more. I suppose that what he really had in mind was assistance to individuals in pushing their trade, such as German Consuls were understood to give.

Another interesting statement of Sir Percy Anderson's was that, in his opinion, it would be "totally impossible" to man the Consular Service by open competition, so necessary was selection for the important posts. Later he talked of the difficulty of properly organising the Service in view of the constant pressure from economy. As to this I can say, from personal experience a few years later, that one of the greatest bars to progress was the principle, laid down by the Treasury and tamely accepted by the Chief Clerk's and Consular Departments, that there could be practically no fresh expenditure. If we wanted to establish a new post we had to abolish one elsewhere, which, seeing that the object of establishing new posts was to assist trade, and indirectly increase the revenue, was absurd.

Mr. Bryce came nearer the point. He said that British representatives would lower the dignity of their country and their own position if they did what the representatives of other countries did in becoming something like mere trading agents. He had, as Parliamentary Under-Secretary, supervised the Commercial Department, so that he spoke with experience; but even he only wanted one more

\* No. 27343.

Commercial Attaché. Moreover, he seems to have attached undue importance to dignity, and not enough to the question whether trade can be so profitably nursed by officials as by energetic traders. The difference is not unlike that between State or Municipal enterprise and private enterprise.

What the Foreign Office was really doing all this time was to make such commercial treaties as it could without a tariff for bargaining purposes, to publish quantities of intelligence, and to protect traders from injustice. It is true that many of the traders never read the reports and hardly knew of their existence. I remember a deputation which came to make complaints being overwhelmed by Lord Curzon's, or rather Mr. George Curzon's, exposition of their ignorance. He told me once that he always liked to go into a conference room knowing more of the subject than anyone else, and I dare say that on this occasion his superior knowledge was hardly in itself a proof that we were doing the best that could be done for trade. Still we were doing a good deal. Sir Charles Dilke's evidence was certainly in favour of the Foreign Office system.

Incidentally I may observe that one trade grievance was that, in the capitals, the Ambassadors and Ministers did not pay enough attention, socially speaking, to the British commercial community. In some places they paid practically none. At St. Petersburg it was, I believe, the rule not to invite resident British subjects, and a near relative of Lord Rosebery's came under the ban. The reason for this, doubtless, was fear of jealousies, and I have heard of French Embassies with rules of the same sort.

Further, the main duty of representatives is to make friends with the people of the country, and by the time that they have been entertained, and foreign colleagues have been entertained, and distinguished travellers have been entertained, there is not always much money left.

Mr. Bryce in 1890 made a distinction as regards the Far East. There he thought it legitimate to push British trade interests, if the representatives of other Powers did so, so long as Consuls did not identify themselves with individual firms. In another direction there was also a distinction at this time and for some years longer between the Far East and other parts of the world, in that the commercial work was done in the political department, on the ground that trade and politics were so closely connected in that part of the world. It was not a very good plan, as it tended to want of uniformity; all that was really necessary was for a supervising Under Secretary to see both sides of the work.

From their report the Committee of 1890 appeared to be satisfied with the commercial work of the Consuls, but they recommended some kind of graded service, though without interfering unduly with the Secretary of State's power of selection. From my own recollection I should say that rather too much was made in the evidence of this process of selection. Some of the appointments represented claims on the Secretary of State, political or otherwise, and some of the promotions were made with an eye to giving a deserving man a good pension. There being no such thing as representation allowances and but very few local allowances, the highest

salaries were attached to the most expensive posts, and the pensions were in proportion to the salaries. The Foreign Office list of 1890 shows only three Consulates-General in Europe, omitting the Levant, with as much as £900 a year, while in North and South America there were eight or nine with £1000 and upwards, so that such promotion as there was naturally was in that direction.

The report did not carry us much further, but more and more attention was paid to commercial matters. For instance, more Commercial Attachés were appointed during the next ten years : one for Berlin, one for Austria and Italy, one for Madrid and Lisbon.

The next great step forward was the creation of the Consular Service, for I must so describe the event, in 1903, in virtue of the report of the Committee appointed in that year. That Committee, under the chairmanship of Sir William Walrond, included two members who were later to be eminent as Mr. Bonar Law and Lord Inchcape. I recollect that one or more witnesses from the commercial world expressed their complete faith in Sir James Mackay, as he then was. The result of the Committee's deliberations was a service graded as to rank and pay, with remuneration divided into salary and a local allowance, recruited by competitive examination among candidates who had to obtain a nomination from the Secretary of State. These nominations were soon afterwards entrusted to a Selection Committee. Provision was also made for the periodical inspection of Consulates. Two observations were made about commercial work :



one, that, as I have already said, the most successful traders did not want the help of Consuls ; the other that Consuls should have some business training. The Committee therefore put the age limits for candidates at 22 to 27, in the hope, forlorn as it proved, that young men who had had a few years in a business house would come forward. These recommendations were accepted practically as a whole.

The next change, a departmental one, was, in 1907, to make London the headquarters of the Commercial Attachés for Europe, so that they could be in close touch with the mercantile and manufacturing communities. This was not a great success. The Commercial Attachés made constant tours of the Chambers of Commerce, to find, sometimes, from one to a dozen men coming to meet them. It was also found that the inquiries addressed to them were so often of a detailed and technical character, and that from a number of different trades, that it was impossible for them to have the requisite knowledge to answer. To do any good, the Commercial Attaché must be at the head of an organisation embracing all the Consular officers of his district ; but some objection was taken to this proposal by the Board of Trade at the time. But before any fresh changes could be made the War intervened.

During and after the War, sweeping reforms were made as the result of innumerable committees, the existence of many of which, although I was a member, had quite escaped my memory. One, in 1916, included among the objects of any govern-

ment organisation to promote trade: the supply to British traders of reliable information, not only as to markets for British exports and openings for British capital, but as to suitable agents for British firms, and assistance in negotiating important concessions for British subjects. The same report comments on the distrust of governmental interference which is common to British traders and government, but due to a confusion between interference and legitimate assistance. Generally speaking, the Committee, inspired by the recent change in the position of Great Britain in relation to world commerce, was in favour of working much more closely with the commercial community and largely developing the commercial intelligence organisation. They therefore proposed the establishment, under and within the Foreign Office, of a Foreign Trade Department, which would control the Commercial Attaché and Consular Services and include an intelligence division. It was to be placed under a second Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, and was to undertake the execution of trade policy abroad in general. This was the genesis of the Department of Overseas Trade. A committee was set up in January 1917, under the chairmanship of Lord Faringdon, to inquire into the best organisation for promoting our foreign trade through representatives abroad, including the Consular Service. They were unable to agree as to whether the work of classifying and distributing foreign intelligence among the commercial community should be performed by the Department of Commercial Intelligence of the Board of Trade, or by the Foreign

Office, and in consequence of this divergence of views, the Department of Overseas Trade was set up under an agreement made between the Foreign Secretary and the President of the Board of Trade. It was to be under a new Under Secretary responsible to both Ministers. This conclusion marks a stage in a fierce struggle between the two Departments, each of which was equally convinced that it should be the sole master, and equally anxious to have the new office under its roof. We made a gallant fight to obtain the present Colonial Office for the purpose, but were just beaten. The next stage was a Committee, presided over by Lord Cave in 1919, which had to consider a proposal that the Department of Overseas Trade should be absorbed by the Board of Trade. They found that when this proposal was put before business men there was a strong body of adverse opinion. Both the Associated Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of British Industries supported Foreign Office control. The Foreign Office, moreover, were claiming the Overseas Trade Department for themselves. Eventually the Committee decided in favour of a continuance of the dual control. The Consular Service was to remain under the control of the Foreign Office, but the Board of Trade was to be responsible for general commercial policy, and the duty of the Overseas Trade Department was to give effect to that policy.

Meanwhile, another Committee had been considering the question of largely extending the commercial intelligence organisation by the establishment of a Commercial Attaché Service. As a result, what is now known as the Commercial

Diplomatic Service was set up. Instead of Commercial Attachés, officers with titles corresponding to those of the Diplomatic Service, commercial counsellors and secretaries, were attached to nearly all foreign capitals, with adequate provision for offices, clerical assistance, and entertainment.

Many new Consular posts were created, and the pay of the Consular Service was assimilated to that of the Diplomatic Service, the salaries of Consuls-General corresponding to those of Counsellors.

A further Committee sat to select candidates for the new Commercial Diplomatic Service, part of its instruction being that a certain number of men of business training were to be appointed; and although the number of candidates was not great, this was done, the moment no doubt being unusually favourable for finding fairly young men in search of new work.

The state of things as it is to-day will be described in a later chapter, but I believe it is fair to say that the Overseas Trade Department discharges its duty, and the Consuls discharge their duties, to the satisfaction of the knowledgeable public. There are two pieces of evidence to that effect. When some years ago it was proposed, in the interests of economy, to abolish the Overseas Trade Department, public opinion came to its rescue. Again, some years ago, the commercial community established a number of scholarships for the sons of Consuls, to show their gratitude for the help which they had received. I do not believe that any foreign Government gives its subjects and

citizens more efficacious help than ours does, unless it be in a manner which public opinion in this country would not approve. Complaints there will always be, but the Foreign Office and the Overseas Trade Department usually have an adequate reply; indeed they are as often in the position of attacking traders for want of efficiency as in the position of defendants.

## Chapter XI

### NOTE ON THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

WHEN undertaking this history of the Foreign Office the authors agreed that it would be impossible to include a history of the Diplomatic Service; nor do I propose here to attempt more than a brief note.

There have been Ambassadors since the beginning of time, and a different course of research would be necessary in order to trace the fortunes of Embassies and Legations.

So far as organisation goes, I hope that the history of the Foreign Office has incidentally given a fair idea of the history of the Diplomatic Service. As a real service it has only existed since the days of Canning, who first appointed all the Attachés instead of allowing the respective Ambassadors and Ministers to do so.

Permanent resident Ambassadors or Ministers hardly existed before the end of the seventeenth century, but by the time of Charles II there were diplomats of some standing, such as those mentioned in an earlier chapter, who complained that letters were not answered by the Secretary of State, or felt satisfaction at the appointment of Arlington who did answer them. By the time of Prior, who complained of the inadequacy of his service of plate,

there were evidently some established rules in regard to pay and allowances, but up to the nineteenth century salaries varied according to the ideas of the Secretary of State as to the importance of particular posts, and even in the nineteenth century he could make any alteration so long as he kept within the sum of £180,000 allocated from the civil list.

Pensions also varied according to the ideas of the moment. The maximum until 1832 was nominally £2300; but there was a means test, and Lord Londonderry's application for a pension was considered by Lord Liverpool to be absurd and was rejected.\* The scale which existed till the other day (£1700 for Ambassadors, and £1300, £900, and £700 for lower grades) was established in 1832.

During the eighteenth century there were a number of men, like Sir James Harris, Keith, and others who remained many years at their posts, but, like Consuls till a much later date, they were appointed to this or that post and not to the Service. It was the same with the Secretaries, of whom there was one to each Embassy or Legation, although some eventually received promotion. There was indeed scarcely room for a Service. Outside Europe, Persia was the only diplomatic post. In Europe the number of Embassies fell, early in the nineteenth century, from six or seven to two†—Paris and Constantinople—and even in 1861 there were only four.

The Secretaries and Attachés doubtless had a dull

\* Committee of 1861, No. 2717.

† Despatch by Lord Napier attached to Report of 1861.

time so far as work went, for there can usually only have been about enough intelligent work for the Head of the Mission, the rest of the staff being mainly engaged in copying or ciphering and deciphering. Even of the latter, before the days of telegraphs, there cannot have been a great deal. Many of the Secretaries and Attachés were sons of peers and country gentlemen, who wanted a few years' experience of foreign courts and had no thought even of eventual promotion. One interesting reason for the number of titled diplomats is given by Lord Napier, who points out that : " English men bearing titles even of courtesy are practically excluded from the learned and lucrative professions, from industrial enterprises, from financial speculation, and from Commerce." There, though Lord Napier does not mention them, is another reason for the many Etonians. The absence of work was not compensated for by the pleasures of society, for these young men did not like society. " It is a notorious thing," said Mr. Hammond,\* " as regards the Attachés generally, that they do not like going into society." It had been even necessary to issue a circular on the subject. No wonder that Lord Clarendon spoke of diplomacy as having formerly been regarded as an idle and sleepy profession.† This was in 1861, and Lord Clarendon, even then, could only say that within the last few years diplomacy had been regarded more as a profession, and young men of intelligence had been attracted to it as a career. As a matter of fact, by that time nearly all the Heads of Missions were men who had passed their lives in the career.

\* No. 402.

† No. 951.



The arrangement by which the expense of the Diplomatic Service was fixed at £180,000 persisted long after the charge had been transferred from the Civil List to the ordinary budget, in fact until 1869, after which salaries and pensions were voted annually by Parliament. Mr. Hammond in 1861, deprecating change, used the odd argument that every other service which had come to be supplied by votes of Parliament had gradually increased, whereas the sum allowed for the Foreign Office had sufficed without increase. He assumed, that is, that the development of the Service was unnecessary. Similarly he was against the provision of permanent houses for the Ambassadors and Ministers as uneconomical.

Nevertheless 1861 was a fresh starting-point for making diplomacy a career. The Committee's report was very brief, but it recommended that the Service, instead of being divided into Secretaries, paid and unpaid Attachés, should consist of grades of Secretaries, an attachéship being regarded as a probationary period not to exceed four years. Secretaries would naturally receive Commissions, a point of great importance, as men could only qualify for pensions from the date of their Commissions—their service as Attachés, which might last as long as seventeen years, not counting for that purpose. Moreover Secretaries, though that need not necessarily have followed, moved up from one grade to another in regular rotation, whereas for many years Attachés had been promoted to be Secretaries of Legation haphazard. For instance, taking the diplomatic list of 1861, the periods for which the Ministers had served as Attachés were, in order of

seniority, 11, 13, 8, 15, 17, 7, 10, 8, 15, 17, 9 years. The changes of 1861 necessarily made the Service much more attractive as a career.

The Committee of 1871 recognised the improvement in the Service since 1861, but found promotion very slow; they did not, however, suggest any means of mending matters; unless indeed the recommendation that the appointments of heads of missions should be limited to a duration of five years, subject to the Secretary of State's power to reappoint, was designed with that object. If so it did not do very much in that direction, for heads of missions remained in the service until they reached the limit of age, which was seventy, until the War. Since then they have retired a good deal earlier, and the five year rule facilitates this. Another way of accelerating promotion, which was sometimes used, was to take advantage of the Diplomatic Pensions Act, under which, unlike the Superannuation Act for the Civil Service, men might receive a pension at any age, after fifteen years from the date of their first commission, provided they had actually served for ten years. This, as already pointed out, meant that a man who was not considered fit to hold an independent post, or even to take charge of a post during the Minister's absence, could be enabled to retire without suffering hardship. This Act has within the last few years been repealed.

The other recommendations of the 1871 Committee were mostly unimportant, but it did, as I have mentioned elsewhere, express itself in favour of interchange of duty between Foreign Office clerks and Diplomats: and it did also recommend

the provision of permanent houses for our Missions.

I cannot omit one curious piece of evidence from the 1861 report, to indicate that the service was not made less important by the use of the telegraph. Lord John Russell \* pointed out that, in former days, Mr. Canning wrote a long despatch which formed the Minister's instructions, so that the Minister could only speak from his brief, whereas now, owing to the brevity inspired by the use of the telegraph, he was obliged to supply a larger proportion of the argument himself. This was an answer by anticipation to the common idea that an Ambassador is now only a mechanical personage at the end of a telegraph line. Both versions have truth in them. It is certainly the case that an Ambassador may be a good deal at sea as to the reason for his instructions and the spirit in which they are issued, and yet may not feel that he can delay action till he has obtained clearer explanation.

Of examinations I have spoken elsewhere. At first that for the Diplomatic Service was a reality, while that for the Foreign Office was a farce, but it was not very long before they were assimilated. The examination for the Diplomatic Service was not made competitive till 1883.

Many of the questions asked by the various Committees were designed to find out how far members of an Ambassador's or Minister's staff continued to be regarded, as they had been before 1825, as members of his family. The practice of having them living in the house soon came to an

\* No. 3503.

end, but that of having them constantly at lunch or dinner varied widely according to the sentiments of the Chief. At some Embassies the Chief expected the unmarried Secretaries to dine constantly at his table. Sir Edward Malet at Berlin in the 'nineties was a well known instance. To this day some Heads of Missions have their staffs lunching and dining with them very frequently, and regard them very much as part of the family. It is quite obvious that the relations between an Ambassador and his staff must be something quite different from those between the various members of an office in London, more especially at distant posts. It must be remembered that the idea that diplomats are constantly entertained by the people of the country where they live is, generally speaking, entirely mistaken. For one thing, apart from official entertainments, it is only in the English-speaking capitals that people habitually entertain, even each other, in their own houses, and since the War this has become more true than ever. Diplomats, therefore, depend chiefly on each other for society.

Hammond, in 1861, said that he could think of no changes that had taken place in the Diplomatic Service during the thirty-seven years of his career, except that diplomatic posts had been created in South America, that there had been a great increase in the number of paid Attachés, and that their salaries were paid from a different fund.

So far as their work went, the most material changes began to take effect during and after the Great War, when the number of archivists and clerks was greatly increased, thus relieving the

Secretaries of much of the routine work. The Archivist Service, which was an extension of the Second Division Service of the Foreign Office, was established in 1918. Since then secretaries have minuted papers and worked up subjects, like their colleagues in the Foreign Office, and as the number of those subjects is very seldom too great for the personal attention of any Head of a Mission, the system is without some of the disadvantages which occur in the Office.

The changes in the Foreign Office which made the Service to a large extent an open one, applied equally to the Diplomatic Service, and the reforms of the War period, which amalgamated the Services and provided those serving abroad with a living wage, have been described elsewhere.

The scale of salaries, beginning at £300, with an adequate rent allowance, and a local allowance according to the cost of living in particular places, is very good. The only fear that seemed reasonable was that young men without means would be attracted by the generosity of the pay, and would presently overlook the fact that the object of that generosity was to enable them to live up to the social standards of their post. Fortunately consciences, possibly too the pleasures of spending an income, proved too strong for that to happen. Indeed *l'appétit venait en mangeant*.

After the reforms generated by the War, the Diplomatic Service certainly became a very fine career, and well calculated to attract good brains. It has at all times suffered much from critics who criticised an imaginary state of things, and assumed

that journalists, business men, and even general travellers were likely to be more intelligent and more competent than professional diplomats; but then it is usual to assume that amateurs are wiser than professionals in all trades, and I believe that the Diplomatic Service will stand, and has stood, criticism as well as any profession.

In conclusion, I cannot do better than quote a speech made in its defence by Lord Robert Cecil in the House of Commons on 15th July 1915. He said: "Their function is to protect interests, not collect news—their reputation among the best instructed foreign critics is that of being diabolically clever. . . .

"The Diplomatic Service is extremely competent: it does not attempt the smarter forms of diplomacy, but relies on painstaking work, which is really much more effective."

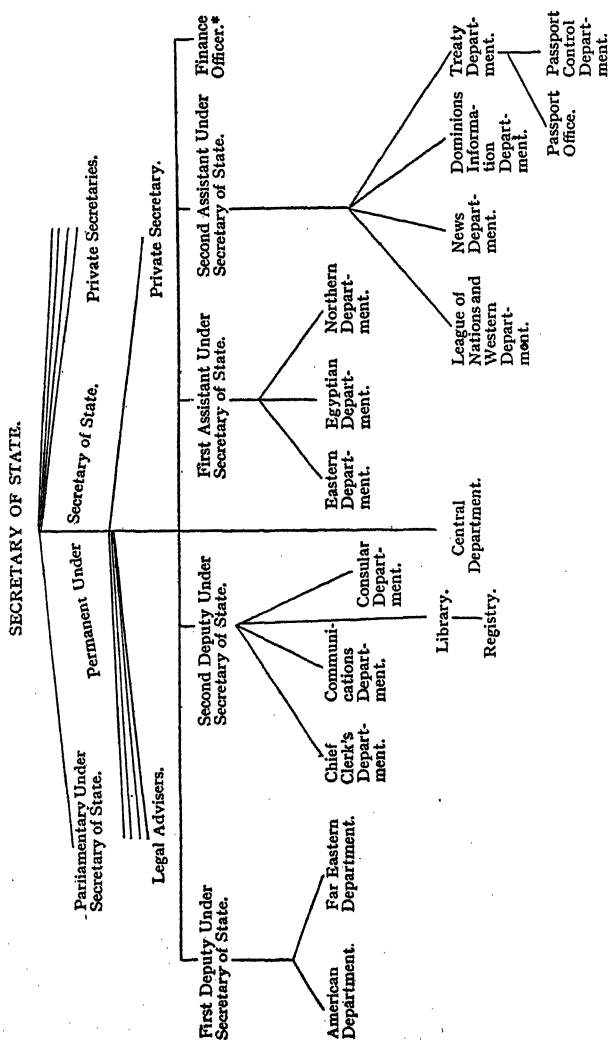
## Chapter XII

### THE FOREIGN OFFICE TO-DAY—THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS

My colleague has, in the preceding chapters, shown the development of the Foreign Office from its first beginnings: the rest of this book will be devoted to a sketch of its organisation and activities at the present time.

The accompanying diagram gives an idea of the hierarchy. It should be noted that I might have shown a second Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, in charge of the business of the Department of Overseas Trade (which also to some extent shares the work of the Consular Department, since British Consular Officers abroad are so much engaged in reporting on commercial matters), and that the distribution of the departments of the Office among the deputy and assistant Under Secretaries is not invariable; a department may be—and often is—assigned to a specific Under Secretary on account of his interest or experience in the affairs of a given country or subject.

The division of work in the Foreign Office is primarily and naturally geographical; the world is divided into spheres separately handled. But common sense prevents this division being absolute, and certain departments (*e.g.* Treaty, News, Con-



\* The Finance Officer, though shown here for convenience, naturally works most closely with the Chief Clerk, and certain sections of the work of the Chief Clerk's Department are under his direct control.



sular, Library) deal with blocks of subjects in all countries. There are, in addition, certain subjects which are primarily most nearly concerned with a given country or set of countries, and yet need universal handling, and these are attached to the Political Department most nearly concerned. These will be found in italics in the following list of the work of the various Political Departments :

AMERICAN DEPARTMENT.—America (North, South and Central), *Disarmament*.

CENTRAL DEPARTMENT.—Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Roumania, Yugoslavia, *Execution of the Peace Treaties*.

EASTERN DEPARTMENT. — The independent Arabian States, the Hejaz and Nejd (now called Saudi Arabia), Persia, Turkey, Iraq, and the foreign relations of Palestine and Transjordan.

EGYPTIAN DEPARTMENT. — Abyssinia, Eritrea, Egypt, Liberia, Libya, French and Italian Somaliland, and *General questions affecting Africa*.

FAR EASTERN DEPARTMENT.—China, Japan, Siam, *Traffic in opium, cocaine, and other dangerous drugs*.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND WESTERN DEPARTMENT.—Belgium, France, Holland, Luxemburg, Morocco, New Hebrides, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, *League of Nations, Arms Traffic, Slavery and Native Labour, General*.

NORTHERN DEPARTMENT. — Afghanistan, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Soviet Union, Sweden, *Bolshevism*.

Two quasi-political departments have grown up

in late years.\* The News Department is partly political, and its genesis will be described in the next chapter, "The Foreign Office and the Press"; the Dominions Information Department is mostly political, and this is the place for a word or two of description of it. The easy days are past when we had a Colonial Office, responsible for all British dominions and possessions overseas (except Ireland); inter-Imperial relations have become far more complex as the Empire grows up, and though the more vital matters are and must remain inter-Imperial, yet there are many tiresome little questions to be solved as regards the relations of the Empire with foreign countries. For instance, how can a Dominion best accede to or denounce a treaty concluded with the whole Empire? In what form shall such accession or denunciation be officially announced—in a Parliamentary Treaty Series in the Dominion concerned, or here in Great Britain, or in both? What shall be the form of credentials of a Dominion representative at a foreign Court, or of a foreign representative in a Dominion capital? How far are the reports of our diplomatic representatives abroad meant for the information of the Governments of the Dominions, and to be communicated to them? The subjects indeed of this department range from the merest *chinoiseries* to matters of grave constitutional import: they are not in themselves necessarily very complex, and

\* The Egyptian Department is new; but its work is not at all different in character from the rock whence it was hewn. "Eastern" work became so heavy that "Egyptian" subjects were taken from it to make units of manageable size.

are ordinarily soluble by common sense, if there is goodwill in all quarters ; but they are just difficult enough, and just sufficiently different from the work of the Treaty Department (see page 287), whence they arose, by a political admixture, to make it worth while to constitute this as a separate department of the Office.

Within the Political Departments work has not much changed in character (though it has considerably increased in quantity) since the later stages of the Foreign Office described by my colleague. The time has long passed since the junior clerks were mostly copyists, hunters of previous papers, and tyers-up of the diplomatic bags ; \* they have a reasonable amount of really rather important and responsible executive work, and they are forced to be to some extent the judges of the importance of their own tasks, and to learn how much they can complete on their own responsibility and how much they must refer to their superiors. I have sometimes, when engaged on the fairly hopeless task of trying to explain to intelligent foreigners the system of the British Civil Service in general and the Foreign Office in particular,† made use of the bad simile (because I could find no better) of an inverted sieve. Business is strained,

\* An old friend of mine, once himself a civil servant, and now only recently dead, used to say to me : " What always puzzled me about the Foreign Office in my young days was that all the work seemed to be done by three or four people at the top."

† So fundamentally contrary to all practice elsewhere, especially in Latin countries, with its system of the *chef de cabinet* : with them business travels down to the clerk, not upwards to the head of department or Under Secretary.

but in an upward direction ; a junior of only a year or two's standing will find a few questions, only just off the verge of routine, with which he can deal alone : his immediate superiors (there are usually two or three of them under the Head of the department) can perhaps deal with half the number of papers that come in. They submit the rest to their chief, and he again sends up something between 10 and 20 per cent. to his Assistant Under Secretary, whence a smaller number still go on to the Permanent Under Secretary and a very fine residue in the last instance to the Secretary of State. It is a system that necessarily means that occasional mistakes are made by immature judgment ; but I believe that those mistakes are never of great importance, and that it is a system so tremendously important in training for responsibility that the risk is very well worth taking.

Before some general remarks on the conditions of life and work in the Foreign Office (from which, since the amalgamation of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service of which my colleague has spoken, the diplomatic career cannot be wholly excluded), a few words may be said of two small branches whose work is largely political, though they are not actually members of the political departments—the Legal Advisers and the Private Secretaries.

The steps by which a Legal Adviser's office was formed have already been described, and it has proved a great administrative gain in avoiding constant reference to the Law Officers of the Crown. The legal work of the Office has greatly increased in volume, and there are at present four such advisers : *the*

Legal Adviser is a very important figure in our organisation, as may be seen by the personality of those who have held it in the past—Sir Julian Pauncefote, Sir Edward Davidson, and Sir Cecil Hurst—and he is at the disposal of any department which has to obtain either a final opinion on any point of law or in framing a reference (in the last instance, and now only six or seven times a year) to the Law Officers. He has beneath him two assistants, allocated to different departments, who can deal with all ordinary matters; and there is a fourth, called the Claims Adviser, who looks after the very numerous cases in which there are financial claims, either on or by the British Government, in which diplomatic representation has become desirable or necessary. It is considered important that the Legal Advisers should not form an executive department. Papers are not “entered” (*i.e.* registered) for them, and they do not actually decide policy or draft despatches; they *advise* the competent department, and it need not be said that the department, the question of principle once settled, follows their advice very thankfully! There is perhaps a danger, especially at international conferences, that the Legal Adviser may be used as a mere drafting clerk. It is an easy matter for the heads of delegations to come to a settlement “in principle,” and then throw it at the heads of their legal advisers to achieve a form of words which will embody an all too vague agreement “in principle,” and the task of embodying in concrete form such vague agreements may prove almost beyond the powers of even the most skilful drafters. But on the whole they have been successful

in reaching workable formulae and arrangements, and they remain the admiration of their colleagues in emerging from what seem sometimes almost impracticable labyrinths.

As for the Private Secretaries, the work of the Private Secretary to the Parliamentary Under Secretary consists largely in securing answers from the departments to Parliamentary Questions, suggesting the line that should be taken if there are "Supplementaries," and obtaining the necessary information for the use of his Chief in a debate on Foreign Affairs. The Private Secretary to the Permanent Under Secretary has a very full time in keeping an eye on the organisation of the Office and in general a watch upon the relations of the Office with the Diplomatic Service, as well as the co-ordination of the work of the Office with various outlying departments. An important post, generally held by one who is half-way up the Service—but its holder is not entirely to be envied!

The Secretary of State has ordinarily three Private Secretaries. One of them does definitely political work, keeping in touch with the work of the Office and acquiring or procuring information for the assistance of his Chief, organising his relations with our Heads of Missions abroad, and arranging his interviews with the Heads of Foreign Missions in London. The work of the second is mainly "diplomatic"—*i.e.* he, in concert with the Chief Clerk and the Permanent Under Secretary, arranges the many minor moves from post to post in the Diplomatic Service; while the third looks after the less important engagements and correspondence of his Chief.

The course of post-war politics has made it necessary also to have a fairly senior member of the Office, with an assistant, as a special Adviser on League of Nations affairs. The title of the post is self-explanatory, and it is not necessary to say any more of it here ; its holder must, of course, be almost as often in Geneva as in London, for he must attend all meetings of the Council and Assembly, to say nothing of subordinate Committees and other activities of the League.

This chapter may be concluded by some general remarks on conditions in the Service, as they are now, and as they have changed from twenty years ago.

One small advantage, to which I personally attach great importance, is that the Chief Clerk is now able to allot to a member of a political department, if he decides to take his holidays in a country with which he is officially concerned, a portion of the expense so incurred. This is an admirable plan—efficiency is greatly increased by first-hand acquaintance with local conditions, political and social.

A young man entering the combined Service has an agreeable prospect before him, so long as he does not think that he is entering on a career of gilded leisure. The work, though interesting, is hard. At the Foreign Office his day does not begin very early (about 10.45 a.m.), but he must be prepared to stay on to almost any hour to get his work done. Abroad, it varies with the arrival and departure of diplomatic bags, and with local crises ; there are a few posts where conditions are easy, but at most the work is steady and arduous.

In a description of the Foreign Office under

modern conditions a mention should be made of the so-called "Francs case." It is investigated in detail in the Report of the Prime Minister's Special Board of Enquiry (February 1928) and was published as a White Paper (Cmd. 3037), of which the closing paragraphs in effect lay down a new and important regulation for the whole of the Civil Service.

For the sake of prospective candidates \* the following notes may be useful; they were drawn up two or three years ago for general information.

Admission into the combined Service is by open competition, and the examination is the same as for Class I of the general Civil Service, with a special arrangement whereby candidates are obliged to include French, German, and Political Economy among their subjects. Candidates desiring to sit for the examination are first required to appear before a Board of Selection, appointed by the Secretary of State, which meets once a year, on the first Tuesday in May, and decides whether they possess suitable qualifications for entry into the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service.

There are three points on which public opinion appears to be particularly misinformed. There is a belief (1) that no one is admitted to the Service unless he possesses a considerable private income; (2) that there are seldom more than one or two vacancies each year, and that, in view of the large

\* Application should be made to the Civil Service Commission, Burlington Gardens, London, W. 1., for full and authoritative information both as regards the entrance examination and the Selection Board.



number of candidates and the high standard of the competition, the average man stands very little chance; (3) that a wide knowledge of modern languages is required by the examiners and is, indeed, essential for success.

In reality, as regards (1), it is no doubt an advantage in the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, as in any other walk of life, to possess certain private means; but in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service of 1914, the former suggestion that every member of the Diplomatic Service should possess a private income of £400 a year has been abolished, and salaries and allowances have been raised with a view to enabling members of the Service, both at home and abroad, to live on their pay. As regards point (2), the results of the examinations for the years 1926-1928 provide the best commentary. In 1926 seven out of a total of twenty candidates were successful and received commissions; in 1927 five out of sixteen; and in 1928 eight out of nineteen. In other words, on an average over these three years, 36 per cent. of candidates have been successful,\* and the average number of vacancies since 1922 has been six a year. As regards (3), it is only necessary to take *two* languages—French and German—in the examination, and in only one of these—French—is a candidate required to reach a very high standard of marks, though it is clearly

\* These figures are liable to considerable fluctuations, and were not, for instance, so favourable in the last two years. But a good many diplomatists are now (1933) approaching the retiring age, and the balance should be restored this year.

advantageous, from the point of view of general total, to obtain as many marks as possible in both. Further, it will be seen from the detailed regulations published by the Civil Service Commission that in all other respects the examination has been so arranged on general lines that, although a period of Modern History is obligatory for candidates, no premium is placed on any particular course of University education, and candidates who have read "Greats," History, Classics, Mathematics, Modern Languages or any other school, are all equally well-equipped for the examination. The most recent change is the requirement that candidates shall attain a certain standard in Economics.

The successful candidates are submitted to a medical examination of a not unduly exacting character, and enter upon their duties as Third Secretaries as soon as the Civil Service Commission furnish the Foreign Office with the necessary certificate.

Statements setting forth the salaries and allowances of the different ranks of the Service and the Pension conditions will be found at the end of these notes.

In pre-War days every one had to serve a probationary period of two years as Attaché, without pay, before receiving a commission as Third Secretary, but this period of service \* as unpaid Attaché has now been abolished. Not in this respect only has the position of junior members of the Service been improved. Formerly the routine work both

\* It is, however, still a *probationary* period ; men must find out whether they like the Service, and whether the Service likes them !

of the Foreign Office and of Embassies and Legations abroad—typewriting, ciphering, registration, filing, accounts, etc.—formed the greater part of their duty. Nowadays practically all such work has been taken over by the clerical staff, and the most junior Secretary finds himself entrusted with his own subjects, and generally with work of a far more congenial and interesting nature than previously fell to his lot.

Again, since the two Services have been amalgamated and their staffs have become interchangeable, Secretaries are no longer faced with the prospect either of lifelong exile or of undiluted office work in London, as was the case, as a general rule, in the past. The usual period of service of a junior Secretary at any given post is from two to three years, and junior Secretaries are only rarely called upon to remain at distant capitals for more than four years at a time. Their prospects are further broadened since the Foreign Office has now been called on to provide Secretaries for service in Canada and in South Africa, and at the Imperial Defence College.

Two other concessions, unknown in the past, have recently been made. The Government pay all reasonable expenses of the transfer of members of the Service, their families and furniture, from one post to another ; and if a Secretary remains at a distant post for more than two years, half of the cost of his journey home on leave is borne by public funds.

The functions of members of the Service abroad are numerous and varied. They are principally

perhaps, of a representative character, for Heads of Missions and Secretaries alike, once officially appointed to a foreign capital, represent this country, the Dominions (with the exception of a few capitals where certain Dominions have separate representatives), and the rest of the Empire. They have to take their part in the official and social life of the capital, and in the life of the local British community. They have to provide the Foreign Office with all available information of a political, international, and dynastic character. Last, but not least, they have to watch and report upon the numerous financial and commercial movements which are so important to this country. At a considerable number of posts the commercial work is done by specially appointed Commercial Secretaries, but in many posts this work devolves entirely upon the regular members of the Service.

It will be convenient to set out the present scale of salaries in allowances from the bottom upwards, as a young man makes his way up the Service.

### THIRD SECRETARIES.

Third Secretaries *at home* have a starting salary of £200, rising to £500, with, throughout, the appropriate Civil Service cost of living bonus. Third Secretaries *abroad* have a starting salary of £300, rising to £600. They receive foreign allowances varying, in the case of unmarried men, from £150 to £450, and, in the case of married men, from £300 to £650, according to the expensiveness of the post, and allowances for the unfurnished rent actually paid if recommended as reasonable.

by the Ambassador or Minister under whom they are serving. On first appointment abroad, Third Secretaries receive an allowance of £100 for the purchase of a diplomatic uniform.

#### SECOND SECRETARIES.

After five years' service, Third Secretaries, if recommended by their superior officers, are promoted to the rank of Second Secretary, remaining on the same scale of salary and allowances.

#### FIRST SECRETARIES.

The next grade is that of First Secretary, to which Second Secretaries are promoted as and when vacancies occur. The scale of salary for First Secretaries *at home* is £700, rising to £900, with, throughout, the appropriate Civil Service cost-of-living bonus. Their rate of salary *abroad* is £900, rising to £1000, with foreign allowances varying from £250 to £550 in the case of unmarried men, and from £400 to £700 in the case of married men, according to the expensiveness of the post, and allowances for the unfurnished rent actually paid if recommended as reasonable by the Ambassador or Minister under whom they are serving.

#### COUNSELLORS.

First Secretaries are promoted to the rank of Counsellor as and when vacancies occur, both seniority and merit being taken into account. The scale of salary for Counsellors *at home* is £1000, rising to £1200, with, throughout, the appropriate Civil Service cost-of-living bonus. Their rate of

salary *abroad* is £1200, rising to £1500, with foreign allowances varying from £300 to £900 in the case of unmarried men, and from £500 to £1100 in the case of married men, according to the expensiveness of the post, and allowances for the unfurnished rent actually paid if recommended as reasonable by the Ambassador under whom they are serving.

#### UNDER SECRETARIES.

In the Foreign Office there are four posts above the rank of Counsellor, namely, the Permanent Under Secretary of State \* (salary £3000), two Deputy Under Secretaries of State \* (salary £2200), and two Assistant Under Secretaries of State \* (salary £1200, rising to £1500, with the appropriate Civil Service cost-of-living bonus).

#### MINISTERS.

Abroad there are thirty-one Ministers, who are generally promoted from among the Counsellors, both seniority and merit being taken into account. The salary of a Minister is £2000, with allowances for *frais de représentation* varying with the requirements of the post.

#### AMBASSADORS.

Appointments to the rank of Ambassador are, similarly, as a general rule made from among the Ministers. The salary of an Ambassador is £2500, or in some cases £3000, and allowances for *frais de*

\* The Permanent Under-Secretary ranks with Ambassadors, the Deputy Under Secretaries and the Assistant Under Secretaries rank with Ministers.

*représentation* vary according to the requirements of the posts.

Houses are provided for Ambassadors and Ministers.

Salaries but not allowances, are subject to British income tax.

Finally, the present pension conditions are as follows :

Under the Superannuation (Diplomatic Service) Act of 1929, members of the combined Service, whether serving at home or abroad, are pensionable on the same conditions as Civil Servants, namely :

(a) On retirement for age or ill health after not less than ten years' service—

(1) a pension calculated at  $\frac{1}{80}$ th of salary and other pensionable emoluments for each year of service, subject to a maximum of  $\frac{4}{80}$ ths.

(2) a lump sum calculated at the rate of  $\frac{1}{30}$ th of salary for each year served, subject to a maximum of  $\frac{4}{30}$ ths.

(b) On death in the Service after not less than five years' employment—

a gratuity, payable to the nearest of kin, equal to one year's salary, or  $\frac{1}{30}$ th of salary for each year served, whichever is the greater.

## Chapter XIII

### THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND THE PRESS : THE NEWS DEPARTMENT

THERE was little contact with the Press in the old Foreign Office ; certain newspaper writers, especially those representing *The Times* newspaper and other great British journals, were of course in touch with it, but there were not the regular inquiries at the Office, and the regular supply of information to them, which is to be found to-day. The business of informing the Press, or rather of answering inquiries where any answer could be given, was before 1914 in the hands of one of the Private Secretaries ; the Great War, however, gave such an impetus to Government publicity and increased to such an extent the day-to-day demands of the Press upon Government Departments, and especially upon the Foreign Office, that it became necessary when peace returned to systematise the contacts of the Foreign Office with the Press upon more specialised and comprehensive lines ; these will be briefly sketched here as they constitute the News Department as it exists to-day.

It became clear at the outbreak of War that some efforts must be made to conduct propaganda (an odious word and thing) in foreign countries, both to meet the efforts of our enemies and to present



to neutrals, in the proper light, the Allied case and Great Britain's share in the war effort. Propaganda and information are not the same thing, and could theoretically be left quite distinct, but it is convenient to perform them together, or rather to allow the same people to conduct both, and one or two workers were detailed to proceed in this way. Before, however, speaking of the propaganda conducted by the Foreign Office during the War, a word may be said of another co-related task carried out by the News Department, which gathered staff and came to a permanent existence of its own early in 1916.

This may be described by the general term Censorship. The censorship of letters and cables was conducted, and, on the whole, very efficiently conducted, by the War Office : but a great quantity of questions affecting foreigners arose, and when those were referred to the Foreign Office, as many hundreds of them were every week, they were dealt with by the News Department unless they related purely to matters of trade, when the Contraband Department took them, or to diplomatic privilege, when they were still for the Treaty Department. The specific points raised between the two offices were too numerous and individually too small for the correspondence to be conducted officially, except when questions of principle were involved, and a system of semi-official letters was evolved which was highly effective, but perhaps would have shocked the purists of an earlier day. Our relations with the postal and cable censors were most happy throughout.

Another kind of censorship gave us more trouble—that of the Press. It is impossible to wage war without a Press censorship, as the danger of giving away military secrets by unguarded statements in the newspapers is ever imminent: and a Press Bureau was early formed under the authority of the Home Office. Here there were difficulties, arising from the nature of the task: and after eighteen months of war a somewhat radical change was made in the relations between the Foreign Office and the Press Bureau.

At first the Foreign Office, usually acting through the Press Bureau, exercised censorship over foreign affairs in their political aspect. (This must not be confused with the censoring of foreign matter of naval or military moment, which was exercised by the Admiralty or the War Office, or the Press Bureau acting for them, and lasted for the whole of the War.) A small quantity of matter was submitted by journalists or other writers direct to the Foreign Office, and a decision given on its merits; but ordinarily Press material was sent to the Press Bureau, and either decided by them or submitted to the Foreign Office for decision.

This entailed the constant attention of several members of the staff of the Office and their attendance during long and late hours. But as the War went on, much more grave objections were felt to the exercise of censorship by the Foreign Office: it was considered indeed that it was defeating the very objects for which it was instituted, and late in 1915 a radical change was made which is best

described by quoting a notice issued to the Press on 13th December:

"The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has arranged that from the 20th December 1915 Censorship by the Press Bureau on behalf of the Foreign Office shall be suspended.

"This will not mean that there will be any change in the provisions of the Defence of the Realm Acts or in the Regulations made thereunder. They will remain binding as heretofore, but the responsibility of seeing that they are complied with as regards the publication in any newspaper or by any News Agency of matter relating to Foreign Affairs will rest upon the directors of that newspaper or News Agency.

"As regards matter telegraphed abroad from this country, the responsibility will rest with the senders of the telegrams.

"The censorship of Press telegrams from one foreign country to another over British cables will remain unaltered, since the senders of such telegrams are not within British jurisdiction and cannot therefore be proceeded against under the Defence of the Realm Acts.

"Nothing in this announcement will affect existing arrangements for the censorship of Naval or Military matter (to which wholly different considerations apply) nor the censorship of other matters, save so far as they relate to Foreign Affairs."

After that date, all newspaper messages passed

through the Press Bureau were marked with a rubber stamp worded as follows :

PASSED FOR PUBLICATION EXCEPT SO FAR AS  
THE MESSAGE RELATES TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
WITH REGARD TO WHICH THE SOLE RE-  
SPONSIBILITY RESTS WITH THE PUBLISHER.

It must not be thought that the Foreign Office gave up all interest in the publication of foreign political news when the censorship was abolished. The Press Bureau continued to send the Foreign Office copies of dangerous or doubtful telegrams, and it was often possible, in the case of inward messages, to telephone to any given newspaper that they were about to receive a message on this or that subject, but that it would be better that they should not publish it, or a part of it, for the following reason, the true state of affairs being . . . Generally speaking, the newspapers were not averse from receiving this measure of guidance, and it was on very few occasions indeed that they acted against the advice so given them. Similarly, if a foreign correspondent in London proposed to send a dangerous or misleading message to his journal abroad, on hearing of it from the Press Bureau the latter would be asked to hold it up for three or four hours, and representations would be made to the journalist to suppress or correct his message. In this, too, Foreign Office intervention was usually, though of course not always, successful : if the correspondent were unwilling to comply with advice of this kind, it was sometimes possible to telegraph to the diplomatic or consular Mission, in

the place where the message was going, the necessary correction, which could then be issued at the same time that the offending message was published.

I think I may say without hesitation that the experiment, bold as it may have appeared at the time, was fully justified by results, and that the gentle guidance which the Foreign Office were able to give, both by the means detailed above and by much personal contact and countless interviews with journalists, British and foreign, had far more effect than any rigid measure of censorship could ever have exercised.

I must now return to propaganda. It was necessary to produce a vast quantity of pamphlets, pictures, and other matter connected with the prosecution of the war—far more than the Foreign Office staff could ever do by themselves—and there were two organisations outside the Office, one under the late Mr. G. H. Mair dealing with journalism in its widest sense, and the other under the late Mr. Masterman, handling literary and pictorial matter. These at first acted more or less independently, but early in 1916 were placed definitely under the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The News Department was the co-ordinating body, and relations between the Foreign Office and the two organisations became constantly closer, and both of them consulted the Foreign Office before making any new departure and kept it informed of all they did. The Foreign Office were thus in a position to see that the work did not clash or overlap. Visits to the naval and military fronts, to prisoners' camps, to munition works, etc. became a very important

part of this work, and probably had a really important effect in influencing neutral opinion and stiffening determination at home.

The propagandist activities of the Foreign Office were instituted in the most perfect ignorance and innocence; the British Government had never attempted anything of the kind, and they had to learn by the method of trial and error. Propaganda can only be ancillary: no amount of it will have the effect of a victory, nor explain away a defeat. I do not know that I should go so far as Lord Cecil, who once remarked in a minute, "The most we can hope is to do no harm"; but it is certain that many foolish ideas were suggested to us, and that it was at least as difficult to stop endeavours which would be actually mischievous as to devise those which would be effective.

The work, naturally enough, increased greatly during the next eighteen months, and by December 1917 it had grown rather too voluminous for the Foreign Office staff, and a Department of Information was formed under Colonel John Buchan, which evolved into the Ministry of Information under Lord Beaverbrook in the following year. To the extent to which these were independent of the Foreign Office, a description of them and of their work is outside the limits of this book: but both used very largely staff trained in the Foreign Office and the organisations connected with it, and maintained a close connection with it by means of a liaison officer—who was in fact the present writer.

The Ministry of Information was wound up with commendable promptitude after the Armistice, but

it was decided that the News Department should not entirely disappear (or perhaps it would be more correct to say that it should be reconstituted). The personnel was available from some members of the propaganda organisations who were not immediately re-absorbed into unofficial pursuits, and from a small body entitled the "Political Intelligence Department," which had been formed during the last months of the War and the beginnings of the Peace to supply the political departments of the Office with connected views of the rapidly changing political conditions of foreign countries both from the Press and from official reports—all with an eye on the approaching Congress at Paris and the coming Peace Settlement. It was decided that a News Department should now become a permanent element of the Office, and it only remains to describe its functions, which had of course to be considerably modified.

The first thing done was the abolition of the propagandist activities of the old organisation. Neither the British Government nor the British people had ever regarded propaganda as other than a regrettable and wasteful war-time expedient; and it was laid down at the time of its reorganisation that the principal function of the News Department was in future to be the emission of objective information. With this end in view, particular attention was paid to the building up of permanent peace-time contacts between the Foreign Office and the Press, both British and foreign, and the writers of the Press of all nationalities are now in constant touch with the Department. Besides

doing what it properly can to satisfy the demands of the Press for news, the Department secures facilities for foreign journalists in England, helps with the visits of foreigners who come to see British institutions or otherwise to make themselves acquainted with our national life, and co-operates with our missions abroad to keep public opinion in foreign countries in touch with what may perhaps be called cultural developments at home.

There is further to be considered the great development of wireless telegraphy, which may, if properly used, be an important means of distributing British news abroad; and a section of the News Department compiles the daily message sent out from the Post Office wireless station at Rugby which has become so welcome to British subjects in various distant places where it is picked up, for they often have to depend on this alone until the English newspapers are received many weeks later.

Members of the Department are attached to the United Kingdom Delegations at meetings of the League of Nations and at any important international conferences at which the Foreign Office is represented, in order to relieve the Government delegates of the task (which they would find difficult and often impossible) of satisfying the desire for information of the journalists who assemble at such gatherings. They are also able to fulfil an important function in keeping the United Kingdom Delegation informed regarding the cross-currents of opinion and often tendentious speculation which is, unfortunately, one of the characteristics of an international conference.



## Chapter XIV

### THE NON-POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS

It is natural, first, to consider the *Treaty Department*, whose work has greatly increased in recent years as the result of the formation of new states and the constitutional development of the Dominions and some of the mandated territories. The importance and variety of the interests of the Department is indicated by the following list of its activities :

Formal procedure in connection with Treaties, Conventions, and other International Instruments ; Credentials, Full Powers, Commissions, Exequaturs for Foreign Consular Officers ; Royal Letters ; British and Foreign Orders, Decorations, and Rewards ; Diplomatic Privilege ; Questions of Ceremonial, Precedence, Uniforms ; Nationality, Naturalisation, Status of British Protected Persons ; Requests for the Taking of Evidence and the Service of Writs ; Extradition ; Foreign Enlistment Act ; Marriage of British Subjects Abroad ; Registration of British Subjects, Registration of Births and Deaths of British Subjects in Foreign Countries ; Prize Courts ; Territorial Waters ; Deportations ; Passports and Visas.

It will be seen at once that some commentary is necessary upon this apparently heterogeneous

collection of duties; and the activities of the Department can really be divided into two categories (though they occasionally overlap), namely, what would be called in continental countries the *Protocole*, and the executive aspect of international law.

The range of the former is not difficult to define. Precedence among diplomatists, and between diplomatists and other persons; diplomatic privilege (*i.e.* the immunities of the person and residence of the diplomatist, his exemption from taxation, and the sanctity of the diplomatic bag), salutes and the flying of flags, are all of this category, as are also the many questions connected with the bestowal of British Orders upon foreigners and the administration of the regulations regarding the acceptance and wearing of foreign decorations by British subjects. In this connection it may be stated that it has never been the practice in this country, except during the Great War, to confer British decorations at all freely on foreigners. Their value abroad has undoubtedly been greatly enhanced by this restrictive policy.

The acceptance and wearing of foreign decorations by British subjects has never met with much encouragement, from even earlier days than Queen Elizabeth's "I will have my dogs wear no collars but mine own." The regulations affecting persons in the service of the Crown provide for the grant of unrestricted permission only in the case of officers and officials lent to foreign Governments, and in that of decorations conferred for distinguished services in saving life. Restricted permission can

also be given in certain circumstances, chiefly in the case of decorations conferred on ceremonial occasions, such as State visits. In the case of persons not in the service of the Crown, unrestricted permission is only granted for the wearing of decorations earned in the salaried service of a foreign Government, or by honorary Consular services of not less than three years' duration, or, as in the case of persons in the service of the Crown, by distinguished services in the saving of life. Restricted permission is in general granted freely to persons not in the service of the Crown, in the absence of some strong objection on grounds of national interest. This form of permission enables the recipient of the decoration to wear it at the Embassy or Legation of the foreign country concerned, on certain occasions particularly identified with that country, and generally on any official occasions in that country itself.

The administration of these regulations, which represent the King's wishes, involves the Treaty Department in frequent correspondence with the Royal Household, with which, moreover, they are in closer communication than the other departments of the Office on account of the many other formal matters with which they deal affecting the Throne. Messages of congratulation or condolence from the King to other Heads of State, and replies to similar messages addressed to His Majesty from foreign countries, are prepared by the Department in pursuance of the King's commands. The Department is also responsible for the preparation of the formal letters by which the King

announces to other Sovereigns such events as births, marriages, and deaths in the Royal Family, or by which His Majesty replies to similar letters. In these letters, phraseology dating back for a very long time is still preserved. The King, for instance, in writing to another King to whom His Majesty is not related by marriage or otherwise, begins, "Sir My Brother" and ends with :

" Sir My Brother,  
Your Majesty's  
Good Brother "

before His Majesty's signature. In cases where the respective Royal Houses are united by ties of relationship, these forms are varied in accordance with the degree of relationship involved. Foreign princes and rulers of lesser dignity are addressed in different forms. Thus, to select one out of many possibilities, a letter to a reigning Grand Duchess would begin, "Madam My Sister and Cousin."

Similar forms are employed in the letters by which the King accredits Ambassadors and Ministers to foreign Sovereigns. In letters of this nature to Presidents of Republics, however, or in letters congratulating them on their assumption of office, the King writes in the first person plural, addressing the President as "Our Good Friend," after a recitation of His Majesty's titles and an expression of greeting to the recipient, and finishing with "Your Good Friend" similarly, after a sentence commending the recipient to the protection of the Almighty.

The other side of the Department's work includes the examination of draft treaties with a view to

ensuring that they are correct as to form, the formalities in regard to their signature and ratification, and their registration with the League of Nations. This side of the Department is also concerned with the practical application of certain aspects of international law in consultation with the Legal Advisers of the Foreign Office and whatever Government departments may be concerned. The incidence of this may vary from time to time. In time of war, for instance, whether this country is belligerent or neutral, Prize Court cases assume great importance, and during the Great War a special section of the Department had to be formed to deal with them. Nationality cases, in which the Department works very closely with the Home Office, often present problems of the greatest complexity, and require intimate knowledge of British and foreign nationality legislation. Marriages abroad, whether between two British subjects or a British subject and a foreigner, are contracted either in accordance with local law or (when it is permitted under local law) before a British Consular officer. The British statutes which regulate these matters are the Foreign Marriage Act and the Marriage with Foreigners Act. Difficulties arise out of the requirements of foreign legislation in regard to the formalities to be observed, the capacity of parties to marry, and requests for dispensation from the normal procedure on grounds of urgency or convenience.

In the matter of Territorial Waters, considerable divergence of opinion exists as to the limit which can be claimed. It has always been our policy to

uphold the principle of the three-mile limit, and important negotiations have taken place in recent years with a view to reconciling the different points of view. Other departments of the Foreign Office, and a number of other Government offices, are also interested in these questions.

Under the heading of "Extradition" come (1) the negotiation of extradition treaties, and (2) the conduct of the correspondence relating to actual cases of demands for extradition under those treaties. These cases are sometimes of the greatest complexity, involving the expenditure of very considerable time and effort. In all these matters there is necessarily the closest co-operation with the Home Office and other interested Government departments.

Civil Procedure Conventions have been negotiated to a large extent by the second Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, the Senior Master of the Supreme Court of Judicature always participating in the negotiations, and the Treaty Department dealing with the administrative and routine side of the work. These conventions simplify existing procedure for the taking of evidence and the service of writs in this country in proceedings in foreign countries, and *vice versa*, by providing for action to be taken by Consular officers direct at the request of the courts, the intervention of the respective Foreign Offices being correspondingly eliminated.

The deportation of British subjects from foreign countries, especially from the United States, has greatly increased recently in consequence of the prevailing depression. The questions with which

the Department is mainly concerned are whether the deportee is a British subject, and what is his appropriate destination in the Empire. It is an accepted international maxim that a person cannot be deported to his presumed country of origin unless that country accepts him as a national. Deportees frequently have no passports, and their identification often involves much laborious inquiry.

Passport and Visa questions in their present bulk are a creation of the War, which led in nearly all countries to drastic restrictions on the entry of foreigners. There are now hardly any countries which can be entered without passports, and the passport requirement has added considerably to the work on the nationality side of the Department, which deals with the issue of passports abroad (passports being issued in the United Kingdom by the Passport Office \*), as it must be established that the applicant is a British subject before the Consul can be authorised to issue a passport to him. Visas are still required in the case of the nationals of many countries. Their issue is dealt with in general by the Passport Control Department, but the Treaty Department has negotiated a large number of agreements for the abolition of visas, and supervises the issue of diplomatic visas to diplomats and officials.

In view of the nature of the functions of the Department, it has been found advisable for two of its higher posts to be held by officers of the non-diplomatic establishment who, not being liable to be moved from post to post in the same manner as the diplomatic staff, are able to acquire, by long

\* See below, p. 313.

experience in the Department, an intimate knowledge of its highly technical work.

A former Superintendent of the Treaty Department (for that was the designation of its Head in pre-War days) will always be a lively memory to the older members of the Office; I myself never knew him at work, but had the privilege of his acquaintance in later days. That is Sir Willoughby Maycock, born in 1849, who entered the Civil Service in 1870. After eighteen months in the Exchequer and Audit Department, he came to the Foreign Office, and served in the Chief Clerk's Department and the Commercial Department, being a captain in the Edmonton Militia most of the while. He was a member of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's special mission to Washington in 1887, and in 1896 he entered the Treaty Department, where he spent the rest of his career, retiring in 1913. He was a forceful personage, who also acquired great knowledge of the technical work of the Department, and became a tower of strength to it; but it was not in the Office alone that he was famous, for he was well-known in the cultivated Bohemian life of London, and was familiar with the great ones of *The Sporting Times* in its prime, a friend of "The Master," "The Shifter," "Pitcher," and the rest. He was said to be the only private person who possessed a complete bound set of this periodical, and contributed to it from the 'seventies until 1915. He also constantly wrote in *Notes and Queries*; and his interests varied from the much debated question whether Napoleon ever visited London, to the habits of cuckoos, to "the Jubilee Juggins," and to murder



trials (he was a regular attendant at the Old Bailey \* and an enthusiastic member of the Crimes Club). He published two books, *Celebrated Crimes and Criminals*, and *With Chamberlain in America*, the latter of which appeared on Mr. Chamberlain's death. Maycock himself died on 22nd November 1922.

The work of the *Consular Department* has not changed much in the course of years, though it has developed in quantity. In addition to the tasks indicated by its name, the administration of the British Consular Service throughout the world, promotions and transfers, Consuls' pay and allowances (this in concert with the Chief Clerk's Department), it deals with Government property abroad under consular control; and as British cemeteries in foreign countries are often under the administration of the local Consul, the upkeep and legal position of these are the business of the Consular Department, who also conduct correspondence with the Imperial War Graves Commission on the subject of the graves which are the melancholy legacy of the Great War.

The Department also deal with the interests of British subjects abroad other than those where diplomatic intervention is required: inquiries after missing relatives, the estates of persons dying abroad †

\* A sign of more spacious days; members of the Office cannot now get off for these or lighter amusements, at any rate in office hours.

† British subjects abroad in their lifetime and after are "Consular"; at the moment of death, however, they become "Library"—curiously enough, the transfer of corpses to this country being the Librarian's business.

and many other miscellaneous subjects come within their sphere.

The Head of the Department has, among others, the important duty of interviewing Consuls home on leave, discussing with them the conditions of their posts, and hearing what they want in the way of future transfers. Confining myself as usual to those who are no longer with us, I think that Mr. W. A. Cockerell (1840-1919) must have been a popular person in this capacity, though he was long before my time ; for when he retired in 1906, the Consular Service subscribed and presented him with three very handsome silver-gilt cups, in recognition of his unfailing attention to their interests and personal kindness. I happen to know them very well, for he bequeathed them to his (and my) College—Magdalene College, Cambridge—and they are often on the High Table in Hall on Sunday evenings. I can speak with personal knowledge of the affection felt by the Consular Service for the second Marquess of Dufferin (1866-1918). A quiet and unassuming person, without the magnificence and brilliance of his father, the first Marquess, he never spared himself in the service of “his Consuls,” was always glad to see and talk to them when they came home, and I believe that he was really loved by them and that his premature death was deeply felt by them all.

In the *Chief Clerk's Department* also the work has increased in volume and complexity ; and so much has been said on the subject by my colleague, himself formerly Chief Clerk, that I shall add very little. The Chief Clerk is responsible, subject to

Treasury sanction where necessary, for matters of establishment and emoluments in the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic and Consular Services. The question of emoluments has been much complicated since the War by the varying cost of living, and this has resulted, at home, in the Civil Service bonus, and, abroad, in the necessity for varying foreign allowances for diplomatic officers and for the payment of a cost-of-living bonus to Consular officers. The care of the fabric, both of the Foreign Office itself and of diplomatic and consular buildings throughout the world, involves the Department in a very voluminous correspondence with the Office of Works.

The preparation of the Annual Estimates and the examination of the accounts of the Foreign Office, and of the diplomatic and consular posts abroad, are under the control of the Finance Officer, who is also responsible for the Annual Appropriation Accounts; these show how the funds voted by Parliament for the Foreign Office and Diplomatic and Consular Services have been used, and they involve considerable correspondence with the Treasury and with the Exchequer and Audit Department.

The Chief Clerk's Department has both male and female personnel, and is staffed by officers of the executive and clerical grades.

The primary duty of the *Communications Department* is the ciphering and deciphering of telegrams, and the arrangements for the transmission of written matter to and from our posts abroad. This work used to be combined with the preparation of Blue

books and Parliamentary Papers (a task which is now more congruously performed by the Library) ; its chief development in recent years has been the amalgamation of the King's Messengers with the cipherers and decipherers. A lifetime entirely spent on the latter work must necessarily be rather dull and perhaps trying to the eyesight and brain ; it is clearly better that a man should have occasional respites from work on telegrams by going on periodical journeys abroad as a King's Messenger. The need for economy has reduced the journeys of the King's Messenger ; we have always made use of a British ship with a British captain or purser ; the bag is entrusted to him and kept in his safe until it is met by the Chancery Messenger at the end of the voyage ; and now various devices have been introduced to minimise railway journeys in Europe, by combining routes which were formerly separate. But there are still some excitements in the King's Messengers' journeys, and the glamour has not wholly departed from what once used to be considered among the most romantic of professions.

## Chapter XV

### THE LIBRARY

ALTHOUGH the Librarian has now been relieved of the incongruous task of looking after the King's Messengers' Service (see p. 204), he has still a good many odd jobs, as there is no General Department in the Foreign Office \* ; and an extract from the Appendix to the Fifth Report of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service (1914) † may be quoted as giving a general description of his duties :

“ Librarian's Department ” is an inadequate and misleading appellation, for although the Librarian and Keeper of the Papers has under his superintendence a library of books of reference, this collection exists mainly as being incidental or necessary to the execution of the work of his department.

The Librarian's Department is concerned

\* These have perforce been increased lately ; a great new block of business, communications with and about the League of Nations, having been added to the work of the Western Department, the Library now takes a good deal that “ Western ” used to deal with in their “ General ” aspect. The Library now handles international conferences and congresses which have not a political content, and the papers entered for the Library rose from two thousand in 1921 to eleven and a half thousand in 1926.

† Cd. 7749, p. 315.

with the custody of MS. correspondence, confidential and Cabinet papers, original Treaties, etc.; the preparation of memoranda on current and past political, commercial, and other negotiations undertaken by the Foreign Office, and on the interpretation of treaties and treaty questions, etc.; précis writing, indexing, the production of precedents, and the supply of general information to other Departments of the Office; the compilation of collections of treaties, etc., printing of the Law Officers' reports; provision and classification of maps; and the conduct of correspondence on various matters with public offices, private persons, and foreign missions in London, and with British Diplomatic and Consular Officers abroad.

I will take these various activities in order.

The collection of printed books now amounts to some 80,000 volumes. They comprise comparatively little of antiquarian interest, though there are some early books of travels and voyages which are rare and precious, and are occasionally wanted in the determination of boundaries and sovereignty. There are, naturally, very full collections of treaties and foreign laws, with a certain number of foreign official journals and gazettes; and our own run of the *London Gazette* is said to be perhaps the most complete in existence. It is otherwise a fairly representative collection of books on international politics and international law, kept up to date according to the needs of the moment. The

Librarian tries to keep members of the Office informed as to new acquisitions by circulating at monthly intervals a list of those that have newly arrived, with short, analytical notices, more or less on the scale of those on "New Books and Reprints" found at the end of each issue of *The Times Literary Supplement*.

There is no accommodation in the Foreign Office for a reading-room, nor staff to serve the needs of the general public, so that the Printed Library is primarily for the use of the Department; but approved students are given access to its contents, and the collections of foreign laws, in particular, are often consulted by members of other Government departments, solicitors, and commercial firms.

A catalogue was first printed in 1886, showing the contents of the Printed Library on 31st December 1885: it was drawn up in the form of a class-list—folios (1-1334), quartos (1-1138), octavos (1-16680) and duodecimos (1-1155), followed by an "Index of Countries and Subjects," but without an author list. This was followed by a Supplement in 1908, giving the books acquired between 1886 and 1907, first under their authors and then by subjects.

In 1918 my predecessor, Mr. Alwyn Parker, who had become Librarian in January of that year, saw that the time had come for a new and comprehensive catalogue. After a fairly drastic elimination of superfluous and antiquated material, he obtained suggestions and cataloguing rules from the late Mr. H. G. Aldis, of the Cambridge University Library, and two ladies were engaged to undertake the task. In May 1920 it was decided that the

whole should be in a single alphabet (*i.e.* authors and subjects all in the same list). The slips were finished towards the end of 1922, a prospectus was ready in October 1923, and promises of subscription received by May 1924. The printing was put in hand in March 1925, and the completed copies were ready for distribution and sale in the early autumn of 1926. It was placed on sale, in a strong buckram binding, at a price of £3, and I believe that it has been found useful, not only by those who desire themselves to consult the books, but as a bibliography and subject-index of foreign politics, international law, and allied subjects.

The Librarian is also responsible for the supply of books to Embassies and Legations abroad. (A few Consulates have small collections, but acquisitions are here not systematic.) Some Missions have quite good collections (*e.g.* Washington, Constantinople, Peking, Tehran, Addis Ababa); but it is no good forcing books on a Mission against its will. The Librarian sends out what he thinks fit, and is helped by applications from posts which take an interest in such matters.

The custody of the manuscript correspondence while it is current (*i.e.* during the first two years after its first arrival in the shape of communications to the Office) is treated in Chapter XVI, on the Registry and its system. The Librarian, as Keeper of the Papers, exercises a general supervision over the entry, handling, and circulation of papers, but they come more directly into his sphere when they are no longer current; after a couple of years the Registry hands them over to the Librarian, who



assumes custody of them—and this includes the necessity of being able to produce anything required at a few minutes' notice—for about the next twenty years. At the expiration of this period they are arranged in the Librarian's Department, strongly bound in "legal buckram," and passed to the custody of the Public Records Office. The Foreign Office archives there preserved are open to public inspection down to the end of the year 1885; those between 1886 and 1909 inclusive are at present housed in Canterbury Gaol, but the volumes can be brought up for use, when wanted, at less than twenty-four hours' notice. The 1909 papers are the last, at the moment of writing (1933), sent away from the Foreign Office to the custody of the Master of the Rolls; those for 1910 will soon follow them.

The most interesting and important part of the Librarian's work is found in the use to which he puts, on demand, the manuscript correspondence and the printed books. Any high official of the Office, or any Department (and this means in practice any individual in the Office with the approval of the Head of his Department) can at any moment call upon the Librarian for a memorandum containing the past history—both the precedents and the actual story—of any question arising in the manifold work of the Service. The Librarian and his staff thus form a kind of intelligence bureau, as regards all past events, for the rest of the Office, and produce their results mainly from the records, and partly from historical and other works in the printed Library. They prepare on an average about one hundred and twenty such

memoranda each year, varying in length from half a foolscap page (though these do not necessarily imply less labour in their composition, as it may be necessary to go through some hundreds of papers to establish a negative result) to thirty or forty pages. The Librarian circulates quarterly for information a list of such memoranda drawn up in his department, and it may be of interest to transcribe one of these lists, taken at random, to show the multiplicity of subjects with which he deals and the way he is able to help the executive parts of the Office. It is that for the third quarter of 1926 :

- (1) Oil concessions in the Farsan Islands.
- (2) Italian aims in the Great War in regard to Arabia and the Red Sea.
- (3) The form and scope of British Commercial Treaties.
- (4) Dougherty Island.
- (5) Arbitration with the United States in matters affecting " vital interests " and the " Monroe Doctrine."
- (6) The jurisdiction (in extra-territorial countries) of United States Consuls over British seamen in United States vessels.
- (7) " Bast " (= sanctuary) at the British Legation and British Consulates in Persia.
- (8) The financial contributions of the Succession States and others to the ex-Emperor Charles of Austria and his family.
- (9) The utilisation of the waters of a river flowing across the boundary between two states.
- (10) Permission to ex-Ambassadors to retain copies of their own despatches.

- (11) The position of neutral charterers in time of war, and their claims to compensation when their vessels are requisitioned.
- (12) The British Ambassadors to Russia in the sixteenth century.
- (13) The extradition of foreigners from British Dominions and Colonies for offences committed in extra-territorial countries.
- (14) The claims of the Gans Steamship Company (New York) against the British Government for damage occasioned by the Blockade in the Great War.
- (15) The Chilean warships taken over by the British Government at the outbreak of the Great War.
- (16) The legislative sanction necessary for the accession of Great Britain (and other countries) to Treaties.
- (17) Russian consular archives and property in the United Kingdom and the Dominions.
- (18) The Hejaz (Jedda)-Suakin telegraph cable.
- (19) Various claims of United States companies against the British Government for proceedings under the Blockade.
- (20) The estates of deceased foreigners in British territory: notices to Consuls and the position under International Treaties.
- (21) The interpretation of Treaty articles providing for "national" and "most-favoured-nation" treatment.
- (22) Tables of awards under British-American Pecuniary Claims Arbitrations.

A large number of miscellaneous enquiries is

received in the Foreign Office, both from the foreign diplomatic representatives in London, and from British diplomatic and consular representatives abroad, as to British practice in administration, law, and custom. These are all, if non-political in character, handled by the Librarian, who endeavours to supply the answer either from materials immediately at his disposal or by consulting the competent Government department. He also arranges "facilities" for foreigners who desire to acquaint themselves with our practice: thus in one week he may fix up the temporary attachment of a Ruritania constable to the London police to learn the system of traffic control in London and supply to an interested and admiring foreign Government particulars of the manner in which we encourage the breeding of Large Black Pigs.

The Librarian endeavours to give assistance to historical and political students, if they are responsible people and duly recommended, by replying to questions concerning diplomatic history: and, in another way, by arranging for the conveyance by the Diplomatic Bag of manuscripts and other rare books from public libraries abroad to be studied in British libraries, and *vice versâ*.

The Librarian prepares and swears affidavits for use in courts of law when evidence is required concerning matters within the competence of the Foreign Office; and legalises documents, and authenticates signatures on documents, for official or legal use abroad: he also now superintends the publication of Blue Books and other reports—work formerly performed by the Communications Department (p. 297).

## Chapter XVI

### THE REGISTRY

THE *Registry* is, as my colleague has pointed out (p. 154), a comparatively recent invention. There were registers and indexes of a sort, in old days; but they were kept by junior members of what would now be called the Diplomatic Staff in each department, and the registration of the correspondence of the office was neither carried out by experts nor in any way centralised.

Without entering upon the mysteries of Civil Service grading, it may be said that the Registry is mostly staffed by Clerical Officers (male and female), posts at the heads of the various divisions being held by Staff Officers: the Registrar is technically an "Assistant" in the Librarian's Department. The registries of the Political Departments are staffed by men, those of the other Departments by women; this is more a matter of convenience than of principle, though it is considered that in times of emergency and "rush" the registries of the political departments are more liable to be kept to late hours, which are supposed to be less desirable for women than for men.

The distinguishing characteristic of the Foreign Office system of registration is the use of a "jacket," with its docket, for each receipt (*i.e.* each incoming

communication) on which action is taken : a file consists of a series of such jacketed papers, which are however, separable from one another, and are often separated, while in most offices all papers on the same subject go on to a single file, branch files being formed if and when necessary. This system has the double advantage that temporary collections can be made when various aspects of a subject are being handled, and that a series, even a long series, of jacketed papers can be quickly mastered by means of the dockets, and warm approval of them has on more than one occasion been expressed by busy Secretaries of State. The accompanying diagram shows the arrangement of the front of the four-paged jacket : minutes may go over on to page 2, but it is strictly forbidden to continue them on to pages 3 and 4 ; if they are so long that pages 1 and 2 cannot contain them, further minute-sheets are inserted within. The indications on the jacket are mostly self-explanatory : " Last Paper " and " Next Paper " help to give the place in the file, " References " are usually those occurring in the body of the Communication, " Print " specifies the series (*e.g.* " Central Europe," " Eastern (Turkey)," " Dangerous Drugs ") into which the despatch goes if printed (of course a very small proportion reaches such a distinction), " Action completed " and " Index " are initialled by the responsible officer in the Registry when the paper reaches this stage and " How disposed of " contains a brief record of the action taken on the Paper (*e.g.* copies to certain other Government Offices, or despatch or telegram to a Mission abroad, or a letter to a private individual

(a)	(b)	(d)
	(c)	
	(e)	
Last Paper.	(Minutes.)	
References.		
(Print.)		
(How disposed of.)		
(Action Index completed.)		
Next Paper.		

(a) Date (year).

(b) Department (e.g. Eastern).

(c) Subdivision (e.g. Turkey).

(d) Serial number (e.g.  
E. 2692/1920).

(e) Docket.

I do not think that the vital element of the docket can be appreciated without two or three examples, which I will select from a period of some twelve years ago.

(1) Mr. Lindsay's telegram of 18th February 1920, from Washington :

*Relief Work in Turkey*

Refers to Foreign Office telegram of 5th February. States that Near East Relief Committee are providing in cash or credits approximately 600,000 dollars a month for Turkey and certain parts of Persia, and 400,000 dollars a month for Trans-Caucasia. These sums are, in addition to freight, paid by Committee on flour provided by United States Grain Corporation.

(2) India Office Printed Letter of 13th February 1920 :

*Disposal of Mesopotamian Antiquities*

Transmits copy of letter of 12th February addressed to Sir F. Kenyon. India Office suggest that whole of Thompson-Hall collection should be retained at present by British Museum on condition that objects should be regarded as loan from Mesopotamian Government, and that a formal receipt with inventory of principal objects should be furnished. Discusses supply of Samarra, Khalat Shirgat, and Babylon antiquities. Informs that Foreign Office are



being approached with a view to consulting archæologists of other countries. India Office also inform Sir F. Kenyon that further excavations are at present undesirable.

(3) Colonial Office letter of 18th February 1920 :

*British Hostel at Mecca*

Refers to Colonial Office letter of 4th February. Transmits copy of letter from Governor of Straits Settlements, stating that it is estimated that about 2000 pilgrims left there for Mecca in 1919, of whom about 400 came from Straits Settlements and remainder from Netherlands East Indies. The figure of former is less than normal, which might be estimated at 600 in an average year. About one-fifth of pilgrims classed as "Malay" or "Jawi" come from British or British-protected territory.

The copy of the docket pasted on to the jacket is not, however, its only use. Four copies of each docket are typed (of course in a single operation by the use of carbon paper), and two of these are employed for the Day Book and Chronological File respectively : it is not necessary here to enter into the functions of these, which are for the domestic use of the Registry ; the fourth copy is pasted on to a Précis Jacket, of thin cardboard, which is the basis of our system of registration. I

will here quote verbatim from our Registry Rules :

Each Précis Jacket displays, for purposes of reference, a précis of the registered document to which it belongs and a record of the action taken upon it, together with a record of the movements from and to the Archives Branch concerned.

Inside each Précis Jacket a copy of any outward communication that may have arisen on the paper is filed. In combination, the Précis Jackets of a file constitute a synopsis of the whole subject for reference when the papers themselves are in circulation.

The Précis Jacket must remain in the Archives in the place of its parent paper while the latter is away from the Archives Branch or in action. When the paper is "put by," the Précis Jacket is placed inside the jacket of the paper to which it belongs ; this constitutes an automatic check on the correct putting away of papers. *In no circumstances whatever may a Précis Jacket be removed out of the Archives Branch.*

It will be seen that this Précis Jacket is comparable to the "Guide" used in Libraries to take the place of a book which is off the shelf : the "Guide" shows where the book is, and guarantees its safe return.

The various Archives Divisions keep a card-index of names occurring in the correspondence : these

are for temporary use, and are ultimately destroyed. The permanent index is made (from the original papers in their docketed jackets) by a special division of the Registry (the "Main Index"), and these annual indexes are the means by which previous papers, references, and precedents are hunted and found.

The system has now had a trial of some twelve years, and it has worked well both in accuracy and speed.

Although the *Passport Office* is theoretically an offshoot of the Treaty Department, it is convenient to consider it here, because there is a certain amount of interchange in personnel between it and the Registry, the higher posts in it forming one of the avenues of promotion for the Registry staff. In 1913 the staff of the Passport Office consisted of two persons: it is now (including both the head office in London and the branch office in Liverpool) about 170.

The cause of this apparently inordinate increase is that the carrying of passports by all travellers is now universal, all countries having tightened up their regulations as to the admission and residence of aliens. Before the war, the British traveller rarely troubled to take a passport with him, unless he was bound for Russia, Roumania, or Turkey: he is now obliged to take a passport wherever he goes.\* It may seem troublesome, but in the present state of the world it is unavoidable: the

\* With the exception of some short day and week-end trips to certain Continental ports.

passport was originally like a pistol in Texas ; you didn't want it often, but when you did want it, you wanted it very badly ; it is now a necessity, and it is perhaps not always realised that it is a protective document, commending the bearer to the good offices of both British and foreign authorities in foreign countries, for the Secretary of State, speaking in the first person, says that, " We . . . (here follows his name and style) request and require in the Name of His Majesty all those whom it may concern to allow the bearer to pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford him every assistance and protection of which he may stand in need." The modern system of passports has often been, and not unnaturally, criticised in Parliament on many occasions : if any of my readers would care to refer to the fullest debate, and the official apology for the system, I would ask them to turn up the Parliamentary Debates (preferably in *Hansard*) for 8th March 1920, and to read both the criticisms and Sir Hamar Greenwood's defence. Since that time, a number of reasonable concessions have been made : but I fear that in this matter we shall never return to our pre-war ease and freedom. Parliament has passed an Aliens Act (and other countries have done the like) for a careful restriction of the advent of foreigners to this country, and control of them when they are here : and it is the business of the Home Office and the Foreign Office to carry that Act into effect.

Enthusiasts for national economy (of whom I am not the least) have at any rate the satisfaction of knowing that the Passport Office, with all its staff,

is not a burden on public funds: the fees charged for the issue of passports are a little more than sufficient for its upkeep, including salaries.

To illustrate this section and the last, I append a table showing the number of papers registered, and the number of passports issued at intervals from the middle of the last century to the present day:

Date.	Number of Papers Registered in Foreign Office.		Number of Passports Issued.
1853 ...	...	35,104	9,409
1906 ...	...	43,208	8,962
1916 ...	...	264,537	75,292
1926 ...	...	145,169	239,430*

The *Passport Control Department's* work is the control of visas. These (which are permissions to foreigners to come to England, issued in London, or by British officials abroad) were a feature of war-time, and we have, by mutual agreement, abolished the necessity of such control with most countries. There are some, however, for which the requirement (in both directions) still exists; and a small department is still in being to administer this system, in consultation with British passport control officers abroad. Its dealings, formerly chiefly with the War Office (the danger of undesirable visitors being military) are now mostly with the Home Office, in order to exercise some control of people desiring to visit us from certain foreign countries.

\* 200,000 in London, and the rest at the branch office in Liverpool.

It is not quite logical to consider together all the *women workers* in the Office because, as has already been explained, they are to be found in different parts of it—in the Registry, in the Chief Clerk's Department, and elsewhere. But they are such an important element in our modern organisation that I desire to give them a mention to themselves. I remember a diplomatist returning from abroad at the end of the War, after many years' absence, saying that the greatest changes to him were the huts \* in the inner court and the girls walking through the corridors of the Foreign Office carrying tea-pots. I think they have added not only brightness but efficiency to our labours, chiefly in the direction of taking tasks from the shoulders of those who should have been engaged in responsible and executive work, but were formerly drowned in routine. My colleague has described the advent of the first typist: there are now—in addition to women holding responsible posts in the Chief Clerk's Department and the Registry (11), and the women clerical officers in those departments (60)—about 60 typists, and between 30 and 40 shorthand-typists, of whom 37 are temporary while 11 are serving at diplomatic posts abroad. The chance of a couple of years in a foreign capital is appreciated, and those employed in the Office also have occasional varieties of work by being sent to international conferences abroad, or to meetings of the Council or Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva. Within the Office, a girl will sometimes be attached to a Department to do their shorthand work and

\* War-time excrescences which have now gone, but have been replaced by equally hideous and offensive parks of motor-cars.

keep in order their unregistered papers : this is a sounder plan than making all departments and individuals depend upon a "pool," as better work is obtained by continuity of interest. The different grades of women workers are represented on the Whitley Council \* of the Office, and look after the interests of those whom they represent with liveliness and distinction. The women of the Office, leaving us as they do on marriage, can never be so permanent an element in it as the men ; but those whom I have known have seemed to be happy here, and only to wish to leave us when they must.

This chapter will fitly conclude with a brief mention of the *Foreign Office Sports Association*, which includes both women and men.

Early in 1925 the Foreign Office was invited to follow the lead of other Government Departments by subscribing to the Civil Service Sports Society, and this led to the formation of the Foreign Office Sports Association to promote and organise athletic and social activities in the Foreign Office and dependent Services. It soon, however, became clear that the Foreign Office was in a different position from other Government Offices, and that its requirements needed different treatment. There is a relatively small Office in England with a large and scattered staff abroad. Those serving abroad have little opportunity of meeting those serving in the Office or in other posts in foreign countries. A common centre, or club, would be of very great use,

\* I have purposely avoided a description of this, as it is common to the whole Civil Service. Its working in the Foreign Office is generally smooth and effectual.

provided it were of the right kind and modest in its demands.

Search was therefore made for an adequate clubhouse, to be acquired by lease or purchase, and an appeal was made for donations at the beginning of 1927. It was at first proposed to buy a ground immediately, with the help of a mortgage, but just as negotiations for the purchase of a site near Boston Manor station were nearing completion, a remarkable opportunity presented itself of acquiring a property of great architectural and natural beauty, offering much greater scope than any site which had been considered before. This was the beautiful Charles the First house "Swakeleys," at Ickenham, which was about to come into the market, and this would not only provide a sports ground and clubhouse, but would be a worthy social centre and place of resort for members of all the foreign Services.

A full description of "Swakeleys" with pictures of its exterior and interior will be found in *Country Life* for 16th October 1909. It was built for Sir Edmund Wright, Lord Mayor of London, and was first occupied in 1638. After his time it passed into the hands of the Haringtons, who sold it to Sir Robert Viner in 1665, in which year it was visited by Samuel Pepys. Charles the Second dined with him there in 1674, but the family was by that time getting into financial trouble, and the estates of the Viner family, including "Swakeleys," were sold in 1688. After several minor changes of ownership, it remained in the possession of the Clarke-Thornhill family until a few years ago, when it was purchased by Mr. Humphrey J. Talbot to save it from the



speculative builder. The National Trust (for places of historic interest or natural beauty) will shortly be given certain rights to enable them to prevent the house being pulled down or altered.\*

It may be imagined that the purchase of this magnificent house and property entailed an expenditure far greater than could be borne by present members of the Foreign Office and diplomatic staff, and it was therefore necessary to make a wide appeal to retired members of these Services and others. The burden of this task was borne by the late Mr. Mervyn Herbert, whose successful collection of the necessary funds makes him a figure always to be remembered with gratitude by present and future members of the Services who will have the enjoyment of the club-house and grounds. The latter now include excellent hockey and cricket grounds and hard tennis-courts. The interior is not yet fully equipped to meet all the requirements of a club, and while bedrooms are already available, it is hoped ultimately to procure small suites of rooms for members of the foreign Services wishing to spend a short part of their leave at an agreeable country club.

\* It is hoped that before long the London Survey Committee will publish an historical illustrated monograph on "Swakeleys," from the competent pen of Mr. Walker H. Godfrey, F.R.I.B.A.

## Bibliography

*(Excluding official documents, reports, etc., which are mentioned in the historical portion of the book.)*

(1) *Anon.* Remarks on a national style in reference to the proposed Foreign Office. London, 1860. [A criticism of the proposal to use the Gothic style of architecture based on the argument that Gothic recalls the Middle Ages, and that the Middle Ages were times of superstition and immorality.]

(2) *Scott, George Gilbert.* Explanatory remarks on the Designs for the new Foreign Office now laid before the House of Commons, London, undated. [Late 1860 or early 1861. Explains the change from Gothic to "Venetian palace" style, and defends the latter, though he would personally have preferred the former. The controversy is agreeably summed up by Mrs. Esdaile in an illustrated article in *The Architect and Building News* of January 13th, 1933, p. 45. It may be of interest to note that the copies of (1) and (2) in the Foreign Office Library were presented to us in 1889 by my friend the veteran diplomatist, the late M. Gennadius, formerly Greek Minister in London.]

(3) *Marvin, Charles.* Our Public Offices. London, 1879. [Pages 199-312 deal with the Foreign Office, giving an intimate if not always very accurate picture of life in the Office, especially in the Treaty Department; also the matter of the divulgence of the 1878 Anglo-Russian Agreement.\*]

(4) *Hertslet, Sir Edward.* Recollections of the old Foreign Office. London, 1901. [Interesting anecdotal matter from the memories of Lewis Hertslet (Librarian, 1811-1857) and his son Edward (Librarian, 1857-1896), of the Foreign Office before, during, and after its move to its present premises.]

(5) *Escott, T. H. S.* The Story of British Diplomacy. London, 1908. [Contains chapters on "The First Ten Years of the Foreign Office" and "The Foreign Office in War Time (1792-1806)";

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\* See page 139.

but the whole book, though essentially a review of the Secretaries of State and their policy, includes a good deal about the history and working of the Office.]

(6) *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919.* Cambridge, 1923. [Chapter VIII of Volume III, by Algernon Cecil, contains much the best account yet published of the development of the Foreign Office through the nineteenth century. The writer had the advantage of many conversations with Lord Sander-son, whose memory remained unimpaired to the day of his death in 1923 (he entered the Foreign Office in 1859, and was permanent Under Secretary of State, 1894-1906), and his manuscript was read by Sir Eyre Crowe.]

(7) *Gregory, J. D. On the Edge of Diplomacy.* London, no date (but 1928). [Contains two chapters—light but pleasant reading—on “The Foreign Office at War” (1914-1918), and “The Foreign Office at Home” (1918-1928).]

(8) *Norton, H. K. Foreign Office Organisation.* Philadelphia, 1929. [The sub-title explains this short book—A Comparison of the Organisation of the British, French, German, and Italian Foreign Offices with that of the Department of State of the United States of America. The writer argues that the State Department is rather understaffed and seriously underpaid. The description and statistics of our Office are useful.]

(9) *The Realist*, Volume II, No. 3. London, 1929. Contains an article by Robert T. *Nightingale*, “The Personnel of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, 1851-1929.” [The writer argues that the diplomatic staff at home and abroad is still too much drawn from the public schools and “governing classes.”]

(10) *Anon. The British Foreign Office.* New York, 1929. [A publication of the United States Foreign Policy Association. Its object is much the same as No. 8; it includes a reasonable survey of the organisation of the Office, and touches on some points of its recent history. It is by R. L. *Buell*, a well-known United States writer on foreign politics.]

(11) *Gaslee, S. Foreign Office, 1929.* [Article in fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. ix. page 496.]

## Appendix I

### [To Bibliography]

#### (A)

There have been at different times articles of no great importance in magazines on the King's Messengers' Service. One (12) in *Chambers's Journal* of 26th January 1878, entitled "Queen's Messengers," gives accounts of books on adventurous journeys of the early and middle nineteenth century.

One of these is (13) Major Herbert *Byng Hall*. The Queen's Messenger. London, 1865. [It contains more about the social amenities of the various capitals visited than the adventures for which the reader might hope.]

(14) *Haworth*, Martin E. The Silver Greyhound. London, 1880.

(15) *Wynter*, P. H. M. On the Queen's Errands. London, 1906. [The Life of a Queen's Messenger, 1839-1903.]

#### (B)

(16) [The Late] Sir Ernest *Satow*. A Guide to Diplomatic Practice. Third Edition, revised by H. *Ritchie*. London, 1932. [Sir Ernest Satow was first a member of the Consular and then of the Diplomatic Service, and was never employed in the Foreign Office, though his experience as a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague (1906-1912) and as a British Plenipotentiary at the Second Peace Conference at The Hague (1907) made him familiar with many subjects of Foreign Office practice. I have included the third edition of his book in the Bibliography appended to this volume, as it has been revised throughout by a member of the Office of many years' experience; and though it is an unofficial publication, it represents generally, though of course not authoritatively, Foreign Office opinion and practice in many important subjects.]

## Appendix II

### THE SECRETARIES OF STATE AND UNDER SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

#### (1) THE SECRETARIES OF STATE

Charles James Fox. March 1782.  
Thomas Robinson, 2nd Lord Grantham. July 1782.  
Charles James Fox. April 1783.  
Francis Godolphin Osborne, Marquess of Carmarthen, afterwards  
5th Duke of Leeds. December 1783.  
William Wyndham Grenville, Lord Grenville. 1791.  
Robert Banks Jenkinson, Lord Hawkesbury, afterwards 2nd Earl  
of Liverpool. 1801.  
Dudley Ryder, 2nd Lord Harrowby, afterwards 1st Earl of  
Harrowby. 1804.  
Henry Phipps, 3rd Lord Mulgrave, afterwards 1st Earl of Mul-  
grave. 1805.  
Charles James Fox. February 1806.  
Charles Grey, Lord Howick, afterwards 2nd Earl Grey. Sept-  
ember 1806.  
George Canning. 1807.  
Henry Bathurst, 3rd Earl Bathurst. October 1809.  
Richard Wellesley, Marquess Wellesley. December 1809.  
Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, afterwards 2nd Marquess  
of Londonderry. 1812.  
George Canning. 1822.  
John William Ward, 4th Viscount Dudley and Ward, afterwards  
Earl of Dudley. 1827.  
George Hamilton Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen. 1828.  
Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston. 1830.  
Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington. 1834.  
Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston. 1835.  
George Hamilton Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen. 1841.  
Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston. 1846.

- Granville, George Leveson Gower, 2nd Earl Granville. 1851.  
 James Harris, 3rd Earl of Malmesbury. February 1852.  
 Lord John Russell, afterwards 1st Earl Russell. December 1852.  
 George Wm. Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon. 1853.  
 James Harris, 3rd Earl of Malmesbury. 1858.  
 Lord John Russell, afterwards 1st Earl Russell. 1859.  
 George Wm. Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon. 1865.  
 Edward Henry Stanley, Lord Stanley, afterwards 15th Earl of Derby. 1866.  
 George Wm. Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon. 1868.  
 Granville George Leveson Gower, 2nd Earl Granville. 1870.  
 Edward Henry Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby. 1874.  
 Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury. 1878.  
 Granville George Leveson Gower, 2nd Earl Granville. 1880.  
 Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury. 1885.  
 Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery. February 1886.  
 Stafford Henry Northcote, 1st Earl of Iddesleigh. August 1886.  
 Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury. 1887.  
 Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery. 1892.  
 John Wodehouse, 1st Earl of Kimberley. 1894.  
 Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury. 1895.  
 Henry Charles Keith Petty Fitzmaurice, 5th Marquess of Lansdowne. 1900.  
 Sir Edward Grey, Bart., later Viscount Grey of Fallodon. 1905.  
 Arthur James Balfour, afterwards the Earl of Balfour. 1916.  
 Lord Robert Cecil, later Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. 1918.  
 Earl (afterwards Marquess) Curzon of Kedleston. 1919.  
 James Ramsay MacDonald. January 1924.  
 Austen Chamberlain, later Sir Austen Chamberlain. November 1924.  
 Arthur Henderson. 1929.  
 Rufus Daniel Isaacs, 1st Marquess of Reading. August 1931.  
 Sir John Simon. November 1931.

## (2) THE UNDER SECRETARIES OF STATE

Richard Brinsley Sheridan; William Fraser\*; George Maddison.  
1782.

St. Andrew St. John. 1783.

James Bland Burges, afterwards Sir J. B. Burges Lamb. 1789.

Hon. Dudley Ryder, afterwards 2nd Lord Harrowby and 1st  
Earl of Harrowby. 1789.

George Aust (Permanent). 1790.

George Hammond (Permanent). 1795.

George Canning, afterwards Secretary of State for Foreign  
Affairs. 1796.

John Hookham Frere. 1799.

Edward Fisher. 1800.

Lord Hervey, afterwards 5th Earl of Bristol, and later 1st Marquess  
of Bristol. 1801.

Charles Arbuthnot. 1803.

Hon. William Eliot, afterwards 2nd Earl of St. Germans. 1804.

Robert Ward. 1805.

Hon. George Walpole. 1806.

Sir Francis Vincent. 1806.

George Hammond (Permanent). 1807.

James Edward Harris, Viscount FitzHarris, afterwards 2nd Earl  
of Malmesbury. 1807.

Hon. Charles Bagot. 1807.

William Richard Hamilton (Permanent). 1809.

Culling Charles Smith. 1809.

Edward Cooke. 1812.

Joseph Planta, afterwards Rt. Hon. Joseph Planta (Permanent). 1817.

Richard Charles Francis Meade, 3rd Earl of Clanwilliam. 1822.

Lord Francis Nathaniel Conyngham, 2nd Marquess Conyngham.  
1823.

Charles Augustus Ellis, 6th Lord Howard de Walden, and 2nd  
Lord Seaford. 1824.

Ulick John de Burgh, 1st Marquess of Clanricarde. 1826.

John Backhouse (Permanent). 1827.

Cospatrick Alexander Home, Lord Dunglas, 11th Earl of Home.  
1828.

\* Maddison succeeded Sheridan, and St. John succeeded Maddison; but Fraser was  
alone, 1783-1789 (see p. 27).

Sir George Shee. 1830.

George Cowper, Viscount Fordwich, afterwards 6th Earl Cowper. 1834.

Philip Henry Stanhope, Viscount Mahon, afterwards 5th Earl Stanhope. 1834.

Hon. William Thomas Horner Fox Strangways, afterwards 4th Earl of Ilchester. 1835.

Granville Geo. Leveson Gower, Viscount Leveson, afterwards 2nd Earl Granville. 1840.

Charles John Canning, Viscount Canning, afterwards Earl Canning. 1841.

Henry Unwin Addington, afterwards Rt. Hon. H. U. Addington (Permanent). 1842.

Hon. George Augustus Fred. Percy Sydney Smythe, afterwards 7th Viscount Strangford. 1846.

E. J. Stanley, afterwards Lord Eddisbury, and later 2nd Lord Stanley of Alderley. 1846.

Austen Henry Layard, afterwards Rt. Hon. Sir A. H. Layard. 1852.

Edward H. Stanley, Lord Stanley of Bickerstaffe, afterwards 15th Earl of Derby. 1852.

John Wodehouse, 3rd Lord Wodehouse, 1st Earl of Kimberley. 1852.

Rt. Hon. Edmund Hammond, afterwards Lord Hammond (Permanent). 1854.

Henry Petty Fitzmaurice, Earl of Shelburne, afterwards 4th Marquess of Lansdowne. 1856.

William R. Seymour Vesey Fitzgerald, afterwards Rt. Hon. Sir W. . . 1858.

James Murray (Assistant). 1858.

John Wodehouse, 3rd Lord Wodehouse, 1st Earl of Kimberley. 1859.

Austen Henry Layard, afterwards Rt. Hon. Sir A. H. Layard. 1861.

Edward Christopher Egerton. 1866.

Arthur John Otway, afterwards Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur Otway. 1868.

Hon. Thomas Charles William Spring Rice (Assistant). 1869.

Odo W. L. Russell, afterwards Rt. Hon. Lord Odo W. L. Russell, and later Lord Ampthill (Assistant). 1870.

George Henry Charles Byng, Viscount Enfield, afterwards Earl of Strafford. 1871.



Charles Stuart Aubrey Abbot, Lord Tenterden (Assistant). 1871.  
 Charles Stuart Aubrey Abbott, Lord Tenterden (Permanent).  
 1873.

Thomas Villiers Lister, afterwards Sir Villiers Lister (Assistant).  
 1873.

\*Hon. Robert Bourke, afterwards Lord Connemara, later  
 Governor of Madras. 1874.

Sir Julian (afterwards Lord) Pauncefote (Assistant), later  
 Ambassador at Washington. 1876.

\*Sir Charles (afterwards Rt. Hon. Sir Charles) W. Dilke, later  
 President of the Local Government Board. 1880.

Sir Julian (afterwards Lord) Pauncefote (Permanent), later  
 Ambassador at Washington. 1882.

Philip W. Currie, afterwards Lord Currie (Assistant), later  
 Ambassador at Constantinople and Rome. 1882.

\*Lord Edmond George Petty Fitzmaurice, later Lord Fitzmaurice,  
 afterwards Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. 1883.

\*Rt. Hon. Robert Bourke, afterwards Lord Connemara, later  
 Governor of Madras. 1885.

\*James Bryce, afterwards Viscount Bryce, later Ambassador at  
 Washington. 1886.

Rt. Hon. Sir James Fergusson, afterwards Postmaster-General.  
 1886.

Sir Philip W. Currie, afterwards Lord Currie (Permanent);  
 later Ambassador at Constantinople and Rome. 1889.

Sir Thomas H. Sanderson, afterwards Lord Sanderson (Assistant).  
 1889.

\*James William Lowther, now Viscount Ullswater; later Speaker  
 of the House of Commons. 1891.

\*Sir Edward Grey, now Rt. Hon. Viscount Grey of Fallodon;  
 afterwards Secretary of State. 1892.

Sir Thomas H. (afterwards Lord) Sanderson (Permanent). 1894.

Sir H. Percy Anderson (Assistant). 1894.

Hon. Francis L. Bertie, afterwards Viscount Bertie of Thame  
 (Assistant); later Ambassador at Paris. 1894.

Rt. Hon. George N. Curzon, afterwards Marquess Curzon  
 of Kedleston; later Governor-General of India, Lord  
 President of the Council, Acting Secretary of State, Secretary  
 of State, and afterwards Lord President of the Council.  
 1895.

\* Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State.

- Hon. Francis H. (afterwards Rt. Hon. Sir F. H.) Villiers (Assistant); later Ambassador at Brussels. 1896.
- Sir Martin Le M. H. Gosselin (Assistant); afterwards Minister at Lisbon. 1898.
- \*Rt. Hon. Wm. St. John Fremantle Brodrick, afterwards Earl of Middleton; later Secretary of State for War, and Secretary of State for India. 1898.
- \*Viscount Cranborne, afterwards 4th Marquess of Salisbury; later Lord Privy Seal and President of the Board of Trade 1900.
- Francis A. (afterwards Sir F. A.) Campbell (Assistant). 1902.
- Hon. Charles Hardinge, afterwards Lord Hardinge of Penshurst (Assistant). 1903.
- \*Henry Algernon George, Earl Percy. 1903.
- Sir Eldon Gorst (Assistant); afterwards Agent and Consul-General in Egypt. 1904.
- \*Lord Edmond George Petty Fitzmaurice, later Lord Fitzmaurice; afterwards Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. 1905.
- Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Hardinge, later Lord Hardinge of Penshurst (Permanent); afterwards Governor-General of India, and again Permanent Under Secretary of State, later Ambassador at Paris. 1906.
- Hon. Sir Eric Barrington (Assistant). 1906.
- Louis (later Rt. Hon. Sir L.) Mallet (Assistant); afterwards Ambassador at Constantinople. 1907.
- Walter L. F. G. (afterwards Sir W.) Langley (Assistant). 1907.
- \*Thomas (afterwards Rt. Hon. T.) McKinnon Wood; later Financial Secretary to the Treasury. 1908.
- Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur Nicolson (afterwards Lord Carnock) (Permanent). 1910.
- \*Francis (later the Rt. Hon. Sir F.) Dyke Acland; afterwards Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. 1911.
- Sir Eyre Crowe (Assistant). 1912.
- Sir Ralph S. Paget (later Rt. Hon.) (Assistant); afterwards Ambassador at Rio de Janeiro. 1913.
- Sir Algernon Law. 1914.
- \*Hon. Neil J. A. Primrose. 1915.
- \*Rt. Hon. Lord Robert Cecil, later Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. 1915.

\* Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State.

- Lord Hardinge of Penshurst; afterwards Ambassador at Paris. 1916.  
 Sir Ronald W. Graham (later Rt. Hon.) (Assistant); afterwards  
 Ambassador at Rome. 1916.  
 Commander the Rt. Hon. Frederick Leverton Harris (Assistant).  
 1917.
- \*Sir Arthur Steel Maitland; Additional Parliamentary Under  
 Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 1917.
  - \*Rt. Hon. Sir Laming Worthington Evans; afterwards Secretary  
 of State for War. 1918.
  - Sir William G. Tyrrell, later Lord Tyrrell (Assistant); afterwards  
 Ambassador at Paris. 1918.
  - \*Cecil Bisshopp Harmsworth. 1919.
  - \*Col. (later Rt. Hon.) Sir Hamar Greenwood; Additional Parlia-  
 mentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; after-  
 wards Chief Secretary for Ireland. 1919.
  - \*Frederic (later Rt. Hon. F) George Kellaway; Additional Parlia-  
 mentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; after-  
 wards Postmaster-General. 1920.
  - Sir Eyre Crowe (Permanent). 1920.
  - Hon. Sir Ronald Lindsay. 1921.
  - \*Sir Philip Lloyd-Greame (now Cunliffe-Lister); Additional  
 Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.  
 1921.
  - Charles (later Sir) Hubert Montgomery (Assistant); afterwards  
 Minister at The Hague. 1922.
  - \*Sir William Joynson-Hicks, later Viscount Brentford; Additional  
 Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.  
 1922.
  - \*Ronald (afterwards the Rt. Hon. Ronald) McNeill, later Lord  
 Cushendun of Cushendun. 1922.
  - \*Lieut.-Col. Albert Buckley; Additional Parliamentary Under  
 Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 1923.
  - \*Arthur Augustus William Harry Ponsonby, later Lord Ponsonby  
 of Shulebrede. 1924.
  - \*William Lunn; Additional Parliamentary Under Secretary of  
 State for Foreign Affairs. 1924.
  - \*Arthur Michael, (later Sir A. M.) Samuel; Additional Parlia-  
 mentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 1924.
  - \*Rt. Hon. Ronald McNeill, later Lord Cushendun of Cushendun.  
 1924.

\* Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State.

Sir William G. Tyrrell (later Lord Tyrrell); afterwards Ambassador at Paris (Permanent). 1925.

Victor (now Sir V.) A. A. H. Wellesley (Deputy). 1925.

John Duncan Gregory (Assistant). 1925.

\*Rt. Hon. Godfrey Tennyson Lampson Locker-Lampson. 1925.

Robert (now Sir R.) Gilbert Vansittart (Assistant). 1928.

Rt. Hon. Sir Ronald Charles Lindsay; afterwards Ambassador at Washington. 1928.

Lancelot (later Sir L.) Oliphant (Assistant). 1929.

\*Hugh Dalton. 1929.

\*George (now Sir G.) Masterman Gillett; Additional Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 1929.

George (now Sir George) Augustus Mounsey (Assistant). 1929.

Sir Robert Gilbert Vansittart (Permanent). 1930.

Sir Hubert Montgomery (Deputy). 1930.

\*Robert Anthony Eden. 1931.

\*Rt. Hon. Sir Hilton Young; Additional Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 1931.

David John Colville; Additional Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 1932.

Sir Frederick George Augustus Butler (Assistant). 1933.

Charles Howard Smith (Assistant). 1933.

\* Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State.

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